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A PREFACE TO CHRISTIAN FAITH IN A  
NEW AGE





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# A PREFACE TO CHRISTIAN FAITH IN A NEW AGE

BY

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## A FOREWORD OF EXPLANATION

THERE is a faith that overcomes the world, or at least there has been such a faith, and there is a faith, as is only too obvious, that is overcome by the world. The prophets who write "Declines and Falls" have in recent times been busy with their forecasts and they have found much disturbing material. There are many confusions abroad which are bound to arrest attention and to chill optimistic hopes. Among the many confusions there are two types that are most clearly in the foreground of present-day consciousness. The financial confusion is a well-recognized fact, patent to all observers. Every industry is affected. Every investor of money is seriously concerned. Every laborer is made anxious. Every banker is worried. Every statesman in every country is harried over problems of budgets and balances, currency values and doles. Never before, perhaps, to quite the same extent has the whole world been made conscious at one time of business depression and of the tragedies of unemployment.

There is at the same time a drift of moral and spiritual confusion which is as widespread and as ominous, though it does not come home in the same arresting

fashion to every home and to every class of society. It is not evenly distributed. It is more obvious in some places than it is in others. The great flywheel of habit carries many persons along their old paths and ensures social stability at least for a time, but the old order has given way and there is a vast element of moral chaos. Crime waves have swept over great centers of population in countries that used to be sane and ordered. Bandits infest not only what the pious call "heathen lands," but, as well, lands which boast of "Christian civilization." They are almost certainly symptoms of a deeper trouble. The steadying stabilizing power of a great faith has for many persons waned. The rush and hurry, the speed and drive, which prevail, are significant signs of nervous restlessness, if not of hysteria. Serenity and calm are not characteristic virtues of the age. Depth of life and power of endurance which come from the vision of great realities are none too common. The horizon of life with its far perspectives and expectations has narrowed, and the focus of attention has become distinctly secular and this-worldly. Question marks blur the most sacredarks and sanctuaries. There is a "run" on the bank of the ages and the most stable moral and spiritual assets of the past are being critically scrutinized.

At last, the world has been shaken awake and is clearly conscious of its financial confusions. Its experts are busy night and day endeavoring to discover how to

save the remnants of wealth, how to stabilize currency, and how to care for those who suffer from unemployment, with the hope eventually of finding a way to give regular employment to all the able-bodied workers of the world.

There is as yet no such awakening to the prevailing moral and spiritual confusion, no such urgency to discover what is the matter with our lives, or what is more important, to find out how to rebuild the shattered foundations of the spiritual structure. It is high time to awake out of sleep and to put on the armor of light. If bankers and statesmen of all countries come together to consult, and hurry from land to land to study the situation, why do not the leaders of thought and the experts concerning the way of life, show a like concern to re-assess the spiritual assets of the race and to point out those realities which still abide because they possess an eternal quality and cannot be shaken?

This situation in which the world finds itself cannot be remedied by a spray of rose water. There is no quick panacea which will put things right. The kind of obsession which has infected our lives and minds calls for a new type of "cure of souls," and a most serious work of searching the depths of our being. It is not the business alone of some one lone prophet crying in the wilderness. It will need the coöperative efforts of all those who have experience and wisdom and vision and

insight. If we could get all such leaders awake to the issues, as at last the financial experts are awake, there would be good ground for hope that solid foundations for the spiritual structure would be found.

The various types of confusion, almost certainly, go back to a common root and basis. We shall not get permanent stability in any one field until we are on the way to get it in the other fields. There are moral and spiritual grounds involved in the economic and financial confusion as well as purely economic grounds. It is impossible to defy the moral laws of the world and still to have a stable, economic order and to have business go on "as usual." Before the troubles of the world are over we must right wrongs, deal justly, and love mercy, and walk humbly before our God. There are moral and spiritual principles of life that are older than banks or stock-markets and they underlie and undergird the whole of individual and social and national well-being. The bankers and statesmen in the end will need to ask some deeper questions than those that merely concern budgets and balances and the stabilization of currency. The times call for a new type of leadership.

The Christian message and the spiritual task, like the economic and financial problems, have suddenly broadened out and become world-wide issues. We cannot have an effective message or a dynamic gospel for China or for India unless we can discover some fresh

power, some deeper interpretation of life that will transform our own civilization and *inaugurate a new epoch of faith here in America*. We shall not see a new stage of Christian life in far-away fields where missionaries labor until a new breath of life and power touches us and breaks the stranglehold of secularism in the homelands. We must learn how to consume our own selfishness in a new flame of love for Christ and His Kingdom. We need to have our smug self-satisfied lives invaded by an absorbing and self-annihilating passion of sacrificial love.

We want to know why Christianity is running on low gear. We need to ask what ought to be expected of the Christian Church in this new age. What is its program and what is the secret of its power? What realities survive all the acid tests? What is the live rolled up an immense total of achievements. It has nucleus of our faith to-day and what message can the churches offer a confused world in these days? This book is not a complete survey. It makes no claims to finality or to comprehensiveness. It is what it modestly calls itself, *a Preface*. The author of it is a member of the Foreign Missions Appraisal Commission for the Orient. He felt that he could not consistently bring himself to accept a place in that Commission if nothing was to be done to search our own souls and to inquire into the state of Christianity here at home. It seemed to him unwise to try to appraise the situa-



tion abroad while assuming, without further question, that everything is as it should be here in the home field.

He expressed that view to the Directors of the Laymen's Foreign Missions Inquiry and to the other members of the Commission of Appraisal whom they had chosen. It was largely due to the warm encouragement of these Directors and of the Commission itself that the author undertook to prepare this volume, but it should be added that the Inquiry has no official connection with it and is therefore in no way responsible for the views here expressed. With such encouragement the author selected a small Council of Advisers to give him assistance and to criticize his work. The Council of Advisers consisted of the following persons: Professor John Bennett, Auburn, N. Y.; President Henry Sloan Coffin, New York City; Dr. Julius Seelye Bixler, Northampton, Mass.; Dean Charles W. Gilkey, Chicago; Dr. Henry T. Hodgkin, Wallingford, Pennsylvania; Dr. Lynn Harold Hough, Madison, N. J.; Professor Walter M. Horton, Oberlin, Ohio; Rev. Arthur Lee Kinsolving, Boston; Rev. Joseph Fort Newton, Philadelphia; Richard Roberts, Toronto, Canada; Professor Douglas V. Steere, Haverford, Pennsylvania; Rev. Ernest F. Tittle, Evanston, Ill.; and Dean Robert R. Wicks, Princeton, N. J. The thirty-three Directors of the Fellowship for Christian Coöperation were also invited to sit with the advisers at an important conference and

to share in the study and criticism of the original draft. It was, further, sent to a large list of thoughtful religious leaders in America and abroad. The help and guidance from these various sources have been generously given and most gratefully received. It is impossible adequately to express what I owe to the Council of Advisers. But all responsibility for the conclusions and for the way of expressing the conclusions must rest with the author. Nobody on earth could deal with all these complicated matters sincerely, honestly and fearlessly, and at the same time satisfy all the diverse minds in all the branches of thought and sectarian folds in our divided Christendom. But there is a faith, a message, a power of life, a mighty experience of God, which goes down under all these divisions and differences and which can unite us all in one tremendous world task, adequate for this epoch. This work will fail of its aim if it does not rally its readers, young and old, to this supreme business of life.

Haverford College,  
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A PREFACE TO CHRISTIAN FAITH IN A  
NEW AGE



## CHAPTER I

### OBSTACLES AND HINDRANCES TO CHRISTIAN FAITH IN A NEW AGE

#### I

#### *Conquests of Christianity*

THE conquests of Christianity at critical epochs of history seem like marvels of romance rather than records of sober fact. A little band of disciples of a crucified carpenter from an obscure town inaugurated a missionary movement which in less than three centuries conquered the Roman Empire. The spiritual conquest and transformation of the virile pagan races which emerged out of the northern forests and, in the fifth century, overthrew the Roman civilization was perhaps an even greater marvel.

Hardly less extraordinary, though of a different order, was the slow absorption of the Platonic and Neoplatonic stream of thought into the central current of the Christian Faith. That is, once more, a thrilling story of doing what one would have supposed to be the impossible. The adoption of the philosophy of Aristotle into the Christian Faith in the thirteenth century



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would have seemed in advance an even less possible achievement. At the opening of that century Aristotle was banned as a dangerous menace to the Christian Faith. At the end of the same century, through the labors of a little group of saintly scholars, the immense contribution of the great Macedonian philosopher was poured into and heightened the intellectual life of the Christian world. The "new learning," which came into power in the fifteenth century and produced a new birth for the Western world, carrying in its current the discovery of America, the invention of printing, the Copernican cosmic revolution, the translation of the Bible and the reformation of the Church, was by no means the least of these marvels of conquests.

This brief, thumb-nail, review may perhaps suffice to remind us that Christianity has been in the habit of doing impossible things and that fact may help us to form the conviction that a new conquest more significant than any that has been made in these former crises can possibly be achieved in the difficult epoch of our time.

Beyond question, the present task which confronts Christianity in the world to-day is one of the most momentous of all its undertakings. In a word, the primary task before us is the appreciative recognition of the expanded range of truth which has been gained through the various fields of research, and the discovery of how to penetrate this new body of knowledge

with a corresponding spiritual significance for man's life and faith. Certainly not less important is the task now confronting us of transforming the social and economic order of human life so that it will manifest in the sphere of practical living the spirit and ideals of Christian faith and hope and love. We are still in the period of "New Learning," and in the broad perspectives of distant historians our time will be reckoned as an inherent part of the Renaissance epoch, a period of fresh births, of surprise and wonder, of immense adventure and of faith in the infinite perfectability of man. Throughout this entire period the working principle has been accepted that the human mind is free to explore every domain of the universe and to report with fearlessness whatever is found to be true. No one department of truth need be afraid of any discoveries of truth made in any other department.

## II

### *The Dominance of Scientific Method and Theory*

It will in the end be an advantage if, for the clarification of our minds, we briefly look straight in the face some of the obstacles which confront those who are engaged in the work of spiritual penetration and the transformation of life in this age. Strangely enough, the gravest difficulties in the way of such creative work are usually to be found in the realm of theory—some

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theory of the universe which blocks the mind from the acceptance of the resources of religion. It is just there in the dominance of a theory that the most rigid obstacle to Christian faith and the Christian way of life is to be found. Mountains and ocean spaces which seem uncrossable are in reality not as impenetrable barriers in these matters as are ideas in men's minds. It is easier to conquer Nero's dungeon than it is to let fresh thought and richer content of life and actual experience break through a theory of the universe.

At first the adventurous explorers in the realms of nature were deeply religious men, as the names of Copernicus, Galileo, Kepler, Descartes, Pascal and Newton indicate. Gradually the sphere of science differentiated from that of religion and confined itself to a wholly independent field of activity. Scientific explorers ceased to ask, as their forerunners had done, what effect their discoveries and formulations might have upon the fundamental faiths of the race. They were concerned alone with the discovery of facts. That and that only was their aim. But it was inevitable that impartial science and religion formulated in theological terms should come into collision at critical points and should in time come to regard each other as rival claimants to dominion over human life and thought.

Meantime in the nineteenth century laboratory science showed an amazing maturing of its powers.

With its effective technique, its methods of demonstration, its successes in verification and prediction, and its triumphs in the field of practical invention science has become a well-nigh universal educational discipline. It has scored an immense number of triumphs. It has changed the very basis of the explanation and interpretation of the world. It has pushed back the span of time and widened out the frontiers of space in quite revolutionary fashion. It has lengthened the reach of our hands and the dominion of our minds. It has profoundly altered the intellectual formulations of thinkers, and, no less, it has affected the habits and practices of all persons who engage in labor. Almost every student in institutions of higher learning comes under its spell. Its method carries conviction. Its power of demonstration satisfies the mind. Its directness, simplicity and mathematical accuracy impress all who are capable of understanding. The person who sets himself against the scientific method and the long results of research and demonstration is like a warrior going out with a bow and arrow to meet an army equipped with machine guns and armored tanks.

The expansion of the range and scope of life through scientific study is everywhere in evidence. The enlargement of man's control over natural forces and over many of the diseases and perils which threaten existence here on earth is also generally recognized. Sci-

ence, taken in its largest sense, has, furthermore, made a genuine contribution to the spiritual life of man. It has banished many of the fears and terrors which obsessed primitive man. It has enabled us to feel more at home in the universe, which at least we partly understand. It has shown us how organic our life is with the whole of things. It has made it possible for us to read intelligently the great past of which we are inheritors. It has given us a deeper and truer conception of the spiritual revelation that has come through our Scriptures and the other creative books of the race. It has made us more aware of the forward "pull" of a future that is big with possibilities. The *idea* of an evolving world and of unfolding life has unmistakably had an awakening and kindling spiritual influence upon many minds. If there is a progressive tendency in operation, as science seems to indicate, if there is increasing coherence and integration, if there is an intelligible and dramatic order revealed in and through the process, then it is a natural inference, at least to the lay person, that an intelligent Mind is somehow present and that there is a spiritual Ground out of which the process has sprung.

This scientific temper has inevitably produced, by slow and almost unnoticed influences, a subtle change of outlook which has affected every aspect of human life. Even the nonscientific mind, however little it suspects it, is altered in its attitude and in its approach to

all problems by the very atmosphere which scientific research has produced. Ancient and time-honored explanations of sacred events have weakened their hold on many minds as scientific explanations have permeated human thought. A preference for demonstrable methods of procedure has crept in, grown to be a habit of mind, and has become second nature with people generally. Views that have been transmitted by tradition, distinctly religious interpretations resting on faith, and "deposits" of thought from the uncritical past, are at once met by a powerful drift in an opposite direction. Whether one likes it or not, and whether one admits it or not, some such profound change has been silently taking place.

The careful historical research work of scholars has convinced those who follow such studies that the religions which have come out of an immemorial past carry unconsciously a large inheritance from magic and superstition. It is a recognized fact that the human race has passed through a stage of *animism*. The essential meaning of animism is the belief that all events, especially startling ones, are to be explained in terms of mysterious spiritual agencies, like the *animus*, or soul, in man. Around this theory of explanation vast systems of mythology grew up and became revered as sacred truths. This stream of thought from the doll-stage of human life has run on into the more enlightened ages and has left a deep deposit of ideas which come into

sharp conflict with the verified conclusions of scientific and historical evidence. It has been an easy inference for persons trained in exact scientific methods to assume with undue haste that every belief not demonstrable is a case of animistic superstition. And on the other hand for the religious thinker the task of weeding out the accumulations of superstition and of purifying the spiritual interpretation of life is notoriously slow and difficult.

To hosts of experts and to multitudes of young students, the scientific method has come to be thought of as the only way of approach to truth and reality that is worthy of respect. Not to be able to prove and demonstrate seems to such minds synonymous with complete failure to explain and to *know*. Soviet Russia has put the scientific method at the center of its creed. Every educational institution of higher rank in the mission field of the Orient has a large group of students who claim to do their thinking entirely on the intellectualist platform and who discount any alternative to scientific knowledge. They bracket their own national religions with Christianity as inheritances of "superstitions," and as having no place in the life of grown-up men. It is, too, a basic conviction in the minds of a very large proportion of the young men and women who fill the colleges and universities of America that the key of the scientific method is the only one that can unlock the secrets of the universe.

This situation has brought a narrowing of the range of life and thought which amounts in its limitations to a real tragedy. The first limitation comes from an unnecessary narrowing of the scope and meaning of "knowledge." It seems strange that any person who has considered the full rich nature of human experience should conclude that only the method of explanation employed by exact science can reveal the truth of things. Some of the most marvelous *perceivers* of reality that have ever lived, the poets and the artists of the race, without reflectively understanding or explaining through causes and formulæ, have come very close to the heart of things. We could hardly *live* without their type of knowledge.

Another tragic limitation has been made by the prevalence of a narrow and rigid theory of the scientific method. The Newtonian method of exact mathematical description and explanation gave such remarkable results in physics and astronomy that it tended to become in the nineteenth century the pattern and model method in all scientific fields of research. It assumed exact equivalence between cause and effect and it took for granted that the field of scientific knowledge is confined to the sphere of matter and motion. There is no sound reason why the word "science" should be used only in this reduced sense and many scholars to-day quite rightly use it with enlarged and more significant meaning. But a large number of laboratory workers



and popular writers have tried to carry the exact Newtonian method all the way up from the physical plane through all the levels of nature and life. It is this application of this severe and rigid scientific method that has terminated, as it was bound to do, in a hard and fast cosmic theory of "naturalism."

### III

#### *The Reign of Naturalism*

"Naturalism" may, of course, be taken to mean nothing more than a marking off of a special field of interest for observation and study, or, again, it may be regarded as a philosophy of the universe. Some of the more magnanimous scientific leaders are very modest in their claims as to the range of their intellectual dominion. They are satisfied to confine their explorations to the narrow field of research which they can manage and to report only on that limited area within which they are experts. Their "naturalism" means only that they are severely occupied with their domain of research and with their method of explanation, and that they do not profess to be able to interpret what lies beyond their chosen "naturalistic" field.

There are others, however, who, made bold by their successful work in a single line of expert knowledge, proceed thereupon in the light of their achievement to construct dogmatic theories about the universe as a

whole. Most of the "isms" which lock up lives into arid and defeative systems are constructed in that way. They spring out of vast generalizations which are drawn from some narrow field of observation and abstraction. "Naturalism" of this second type is one of the dogmatic isms of that order of generalization. It makes its assumptions on very slender capital. A very large part of its domain rests on no other title than the unverified assertion of claims. It seizes and builds on a few impressive facts, but it forgets or overlooks a vast array of counter-implications.

A careful distinction must of course be made between "the world of Nature" and "the world of Naturalism." Nature is the rich world of our human experiences, throbbing with life and beauty, crammed with change and variety, and arousing ceaseless interest and wonder in the beholder, the world of the poet and of the common man. We ourselves are a vital part of it and it is indispensable to us. "Naturalism," on the other hand, is the world as it appears after it has been reduced to scientific description, causal explanation, mechanistic system and mathematical formulæ. It is the universe as it appears in intellectualized form. Whatever we may conclude the ground and origin of Nature to be, there can be little doubt that "naturalism" as a system with its immense complexity is a man-constructed affair. It is the world reconstructed to fit mathematical categories and the formulæ of exact

description, and from which everything has been eliminated that does not fit those categories.

Wherever "naturalism" of this rationalized type is accepted, and *carried all the way through as a world-system*, it leaves, and can leave, no place for spiritual verities or values. Everything that belongs in a "naturalistic" world is explained. Psychology, when it represents an attempt to carry the methods of physical science into the higher realms of life, is forthwith reduced to behavior, perceptive experiences are explained by physical impacts and the personal inner life of man is treated as though it were nonexistent, or negligible. A "naturalistic" interpretation of religion follows as a matter of course. Life, where this severe system of thought prevails, is treated as only a more complicated stage of mechanism, the "higher" forms being explained in terms of "lower" units. This "naturalistic" tendency of current thought is essentially academic, but it tends to filter down into the popular mind, and wherever it spreads it blights the faiths of the ages and the ideals and hopes of the race which have fed and deepened the heart of humanity fade away.

#### IV

#### *Secularism*

The busy, practical man does not much "bother his head" with "naturalism" as a theory, but at the same

time he is immersed in another type of secularism, which is practical rather than intellectual in its character. The physical energies which have been discovered in the laboratory have been harnessed by skillful inventions and the whole world of life and industry have been thereby transformed. New industrial, economic, and social problems have emerged so far-reaching in scope that they bring a new epoch in civilization. "Secularism" in the world of activity and business has colored all life and thought for the practical man, somewhat as the formulation of "naturalism" has for the academic mind. The two systems arrive at very much the same terminus. They both put the emphasis on *things* that are seen and handled. They both focus attention on what is out there in space and time. The ponderable becomes so important that imponderable realities and values are pushed out of consideration.

This exclusion of the transcendent aspects of life is often, perhaps usually, not a meditated and willful act of choice. It is rather the tragic elimination of the spiritual realm because there is no time for it and no room for it in the crowd of issues that demand the person's entire thought. The vistas which the faiths and hopes of the race once opened to the soul of man have, by such processes, disappeared from view. The frontiers of vision have foreshortened. The horizon of life has narrowed. The seen and the tangible have usurped the claim of reality. The soul's inward dimensions are dis-

counted and even its very existence questioned. The universe of matter is treated as a closed system. No surprises out of the blue are looked for. No resources of a spiritual order are expected. The vast mechanism clanks on, and will continue to clank until it runs down, cools off, or wears out.

A great many persons who accept in a general way the "naturalistic-mechanistic" world-view and the secular way of life would not be ready to go as far with it as the logic of the above account would carry them. They would temper the hard stern theory of the world with checks and reservations. Or they would inject mysterious gaps into the material system where there might be free scope for unknown forces to break in and relieve the strain of endurance. But either mechanistic "naturalism" is true as an interpretation of the universe or it is not true. We cannot play with it when it fits our mood and then drop it when we want to refresh ourselves with freedom and vision. Even for those who endeavor to stop with "naturalism" midway it cuts the nerve of expectation; it blocks spiritual adventure and it tends to reduce life to a purely material and calculable level. It inevitably ends in futilism. The truncated forms of "new humanism" that have sprung up in certain religious circles of the liberal type are adjustments of accommodation to this stern stepmother view of life and the world. There is a severe insistence upon mental honesty, fidelity to

truth and a careful avoidance of all emotional visions of relief. Some kind of "religion" seems essential to life, and this curtailed humanistic religion appears to its formulators to be all that is legitimate in a world of shrunken hopes and values. The true way out can come only through a recognition of the fact that the universe everywhere overbrims rigid scientific categories.

One striking effect of "naturalism" on the modern mind has been the disappearance, or at least the weakened hold, of faith in immortal life. No one quite knows in a particular case why his faith in a future life has oozed away and vanished. It has not usually been dislodged by argument, certainly not by any proofs. *Eternal* life somehow does not seem to fit the kind of world one finds left to him by current interpretations. The hope of a great future life has grown dim, the expectation of it has waned away. To a great many persons this vision of relief from the hard present facts has ceased to count vitally. It no longer figures as an inward resource in a day of sorrow and frustration. It cannot be reckoned on as a dynamic for noble living. The modern person has grown "weak in futurity." The "spell of eternity" is not for him. It may well be surmised that no other one change of outlook has so profoundly affected the life and thought of this generation as has this blight of temporality that has thus fallen upon it. If a new day of faith

is to dawn for this age it will almost certainly have as its morning star a new-born expectancy in the conservation of the supreme value of personal life.

Meantime, the main effect of this general tendency has been a prevailing pessimism of mind about the significance of life. There are not so very many persons who are thoroughly committed to an intellectual academic theory of "naturalism." And the number of practical men who *consciously* accept secularism with finality as a creed of life is perhaps not so very large. The trouble comes from the fact that a powerful "drift" of suggestion, sentiment, and habit carries along a multitude of persons who have no explicit creed or theory of things, but who go with the push and trend of the secular current. There is extremely little serious and severe thinking behind secular modern drifts. They are not the result of profound thinking but rather of thin and superficial living. Hosts of persons join the rush just because there is a rush. They exhibit an attitude of "frantic immediacy" because "frantic immediacy" is a contagious state of mind. They join the speed throng because *speed* is a temporary substitute for direction. They discount "spiritual realities" because popular writers make such realities seem absurd and they suppose "science" has proved them to be unreal. The entire "drift" *runs* on extremely little intellectual motor-force. Its havoc is altogether

out of proportion to the stock of mental power which is supposed to give it momentum.

The prevailing confusion of life and thought is almost exactly parallel to that which occasions a "run" on a thoroughly sound and reliable bank in a time of financial depression. Everything is uncertain; fears are abroad; panic is contagious; loss of nerve follows; rumor starts doubts. If in that state of mind anybody questions the solvency of a given bank and starts a suspicion of its soundness, the "run" on its resources begins. Nobody waits to get an accurate report on its assets. Fear and imagination exaggerate the liabilities.

That panicky state of mind, with which many banks are familiar, is a fair illustration of the present-day attitude toward the spiritual assets of human life. These assets have been challenged or doubted or pronounced unreal on a quite inadequate consideration of the inexhaustible grounds on which they rest. In the "drift" of secular living and naturalistic formulations, in the rush and hurry with no time for meditation and restoration, in the weariness and the disillusionment that come from the failure of enthusiastic adventures and yeasty ideals, there suddenly seems to be nothing in the far visions and the fond hopes that buoyed up and supported those of an earlier time in their endurances and in their adventurous pilgrimages. Like the naïve little child who blurted out the truth that the king was naked when all the sophisticated people were express-



ing their amazement over his invisible suit, so this frank and honest generation, not seeing anything where those before them saw a world of invisible realities, announce the nakedness of life and the bankruptcy of its spiritual assets.

It seems cold and unpromising to describe this secular drift of the time with its futilities without offering any remedy for it. But there are no quick and easy solutions for states of mind and ways of life that are bound up with a dominant and prevailing type of civilization. One can urge a return to "the simple life," or one can advise the strained and frantic hurrier to insist on periods of hush and silence and meditation. But these expedients are all short of the mark and they leave the world-confusion still unsolved. In some way we must discover how to acquire more adequate interior resources to live by and we must set our faces toward a transformation of our civilization by processes of education and influences of religion. Later chapters will give some light on this deep problem which, though difficult, is not insoluble.

## v

*Changed Meanings*

One striking sign of this spiritual "nakedness" is seen in the way in which great religious phrases have become empty words, out of which the meaning has

evaporated. "Words that have drawn transcendent meanings up from the best passion of all bygone time" have waned away to ordinary sounds. They no longer thrill the soul nor sweep the heartstrings. The same old trumpet is blown which once sent men to battle, but no one is roused by it to put on his armor.

I recently asked a prominent preacher and scholar what he considered to be the chief obstacle in the way of a return in our generation to great Christian faith. His answer is that a former generation "surveyed the wondrous Cross on which the Prince of glory died," and then went out and turned their communities upside down, while we to-day spend endless time "surveying" our communities, and leave them about as they were before.

He believes that everything would be solved if this new generation would once more "survey the Cross" and go out to victory over the world. But the urgent question to ask is, Why it is that they do not do it? And the answer is that they no longer see the tremendous meaning in that phrase which thrilled the heart of Isaac Watts when he wrote the hymn. Why is it that they do not see it? Why doesn't the old trumpet rally them to battle? It is the answer to those questions which we are here seeking. It is not enough to reply that nobody any more uses the great phrases or any longer blows the trumpet. The trouble is that for hosts of persons the noble words have lost their magic when they are

heard. Constant repetition of the phrases has, in some instances, tended to lessen their dynamic quality, as always happens with words. More often perhaps they have been interpreted in terms that are no longer real and vital to-day and thus *expectancy* has become dulled. Then, again, an altered central interest on the part of the hearer has weakened their power of arresting attention. For better or for worse, new interests have arisen that shift the focus of attention. It is one of those new current interests to make social "surveys" of communities, to understand neighborhood conditions better, to try to find out why there are dark areas and twilight zones in these modern communities. To persons with that focus of attention the ancient phrases about "surveying the Cross" come as a false substitute for the real remedy. It sounds to them like a resort to "the patois of Canaan" instead of making a true diagnosis of life.

Dean Inge not long ago humorously remarked that Jesus said, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in their midst," but that now where three people assemble one is sure to be made chairman, the second treasurer and the third secretary, and then they proceed to attack their problem in committee fashion. That situation, like my friend's wise remark about the change in "surveys" is true enough, but it solves nothing. It only reemphasizes the real problem. Organization, surveys, practical results, are

the order of the day. They absorb the mind and in the change of focal interest the meaning has dropped out of the old words, those words with which miracles were once wrought. It would not do any good to shout the same old words louder. It is not a megaphone that is needed. What is wanted is vivid, vital interpretation in terms of our epoch of the great truths those ancient words were uttering, and they must be so interpreted that they take on kindling meaning for men who are bent on social reorganization and reconstruction, and who will not allow any catch words of theology, however sacred, to turn them away from the stupendous tasks that confront them in the world where they live.

## VI

*The Post-War World Situation*

Meantime Christianity stands confronted with a unique world-situation of major importance. It is partly an outcome of the state of mind produced by the war and the "war settlements," but even without the acceleration of processes which the war brought on many of these present situations would have slowly matured. The passionate upheaval of social forces in Russia, transforming before our eyes the entire social and economic order in an ancient civilization, has profoundly affected the psychology of the world. It has

deeply stirred in men's minds in many lands a consciousness of social injustice and has awakened a yearning for a reorganization of social systems with enlarged freedom for self-determination. The entire Orient, to specify only one part of the world, has been swept with a new consciousness of changing destiny.

Counter-methods of repression and control have emerged in some of the countries of the world and as a result the surging hopes of the liberal and radical movements there have been sternly held in check. Both tendencies where they have prevailed have brought an end to what we had come to know as free democratic government. There is apparent in the world to-day a far-reaching disillusionment over what seemed once to be an almost divine solution of the problems of life through the spread of individual freedom and equality and democratic self-government. Nationalism and free determination are absorbing passions in many countries but everywhere there are signs of weakness when it comes to a question of wisdom and ability sufficient for the almost superhuman tasks in hand.

There is no use blinking the difficulties and saying "all is well with the world." All is not well and every crucial situation in every country affects and concerns all other countries. It is impossible any longer to live in isolation and to be satisfied with being "a hundred per cent American." The cultivation of an international mind is essential to any kind of adequate living.

And somehow our Christian spirit and our Christian ideals must be brought into action in the solution of these world problems.

It must be so, too, in no less degree in the vast issues which confront us in the problems of the social and economic order. For hosts of persons at home and abroad these questions are more urgent and more vital than any question of theology, or of religious faith. The passion for social justice and for an enlarged scope of life for depressed classes has swung into first place in the thought and life of many persons. It has supplanted religious interests and for many persons it dominates the heart and mind. It is one of those widespread up-surfing moral passions which move masses of people in certain epochs of the world and which must be seriously reckoned with. No solution of course can be offered here. But those of us who are concerned to have Christian faith become a new conquering power in the world must realize with some clarity that these world-situations must be solemnly faced.

## VII

### *Psychological Theories*

"Psychology," which was once hailed as a solvent of many of our religious difficulties, has indeed brought much practical help and guidance, and has much more to bring, but on its theoretical side it has in-

troduced new problems instead of banishing old ones. Theories of "the unconscious" have added a new terror to life for those who have come under the sway of the so-called "New Psychology." For those who hold these theories, the area of rational control and volitional direction of life is believed to be small. Most of life is conceived of as under the sway of vast non-rational forces, urges, drives and complexes. The person who thinks he is "captain of his soul" is shown by "New Psychology" to be either benighted or self-deceived. In the first century of our era there was a widespread belief that human destiny was controlled by "the world-rulers" of the planetary spheres. That doctrine carried with it gloom, depression, loss of nerve and despair. Unless some secret could be attained through initiation into the "Mysteries" that would free the soul from foreign control higher up, all man's strivings were bound to be defeated. But that theory of "control" was no more depressing than the current theories that life is carried "whither it would not" in the grip of cyclonic drives, urges, and complexes beyond the range of rational control or direction, and with no captain on the bridge.

It is further assumed by these theories that religion is nothing but an idealistic "projection," as a method of relief from the hard conditions of life and of the world. Man "represses," it is assumed, that is, refuses to notice or pay attention to, disturbing facts on the one hand,

and on the other he builds up by vivid idealistic imagination, a way of escape by which he fools himself into thinking that his universe has in it a realm of realities other than those which our senses find and verify, the senses being assumed to be the one sure test.

There are other types of psychology-made theories which, while discounting this doctrine of the "unconscious," would nevertheless reduce all religious experiences to subjective seemings. The comforts of religion are held to be in the same order as daydreamings, auto-suggestions, wish-visions and mind-creations. This view brings us in the end to the same goal of unreality as does the theory of "projection." All the hopes and faiths of the centuries are considered in both cases to be as "frail as frost-landscapes on a window-pane."

It is not possible in brief space to make an excursion into what has been called "the sedimentary depths" of the soul or to deal extensively with the mysterious "unconscious" realm within us. There can be no question that there is a tendency in neurotic persons to have what look like cleavages and split-off fractions of the self. The most "normal" person, too, has moments when he seems to be a "divided self." It can be said, however, that the tendency of the personal self to cleave into separate compartments reveals at the same time a deeper unity, never quite lost, which underspans the divisions.

It is, further, noteworthy that a psychology which



attacks the validity of man's spiritual values on the ground that they are "subjective seemings," mere buzzings in the head of the individual, is in grave danger of reducing also all states of mind, all mental processes including its own theories, to "subjective seemings." Subjectivist psychology, which has no way of getting across to objective reality, is a cult of irrationalism and ends like the rivers of Damascus in a desert of aridity and sterility. A true psychology must include more than what goes on *in* the mind. It must recognize not only the deep-lying fundamental unity of the mind but also its inherent capacity to transcend itself and be related to objects which are as real as are its own processes.

## VIII

*The Reign of Relativity*

Ideas of relativity, which have entered the stream of modern thought through Einstein's contribution to science, have tended to upset our old-time stable faiths in the immutable, the permanent, the eternal. If everything changes, if all things flow, if the universe is through and through a relative affair, how can we expect to find exceptions to this reign of relativity? How can we hope to discover truth that is eternally *so*? Where can we look for an *absolute goodness*, an *absolute right*, which is set forever over against what

is utterly wrong? What becomes of *must* and *ought*, those gloriously defective verbs which have always up till now challenged the souls of men? These "absolutes" for many persons have joined the ranks of the relativities. They seem to be no longer solid rock for anchorage, but rather like the shifting sea-beast to which Sinbad the Sailor fastened his boat, supposing it by mistake to be a permanent island.<sup>1</sup>

Among the relativities some things have appeared to be better, that is, more desirable, than other things, but no place is seen in such philosophy for absolutes. Moral standards, in the confusion of Babel voices, are counted to be no more than social customs which go back for origin to the prestige of some outstanding person whom the "herd" followed. Each age must make its own moral codes as it makes its own road maps. If we are to be reduced to relativities, pleasure (possibly the richer word happiness sounds better) will almost certainly be selected as the best thing to pursue. If we cannot have intrinsic and unfailing ends to live for let us perfect the art of pleasure-seeking and become adepts in the cult of happiness. That has been a natural conclusion and has become a philosophy of life for a multitude of busy, hurrying men and women who know of no heaven except Vanity Fair. Self-expression is the current popular word for what

<sup>1</sup> It ought to be noted that Einstein merely extends "the reign of relativity." He insists on some "absolutes" as solidly as any one ever has done.

ethical writers used to name "hedonism." This easy type of self-expression means practically following the line of least resistance. The natural instinctive drives, or urges, are taken to be the surest guides of life. They are assumed to be a natural revelation of the inherited tendencies of the ages. And in a world where guideposts are rare and hard to find instinctive tendencies offer the quickest and most direct intimation of the way. Self-expression means giving scope to one's peculiar gifts or life-urges. Just why they should count more powerfully than "the still small voice" of the ideal self, or than the gathered experience of the race, it would perhaps be difficult to explain, but they are in any case more emphatically urgent and they seem to be more obviously "natural."

## IX

### *The Survivals out of the Past*

There is one more class of liabilities that should be briefly reviewed before we begin to consider the real status of our spiritual assets in the world of our time. We have referred already to the fact that every generation is bound to inherit a large stock of ideas and practices from the past. Inheritances of every type carry at the same time both gains and losses. Some persons are fortunate in lines and curves of facial beauty that have come to them by heredity, but possibly along

with the beauty of face they may have received, as sometimes happens, a disagreeable disposition or unfortunate traits of temper. Somewhat so the ages behind us have accumulated out of racial experience immense gains, won through the struggles and sufferings of remote and forgotten forbears. But just as certainly false formulations, crude interpretations, hasty generalizations and unfortunate racial habits of thought have come down through this same line of transmission. They have grown with cumulative force like a rolling snowball, and have acquired a powerful momentum. We find ourselves the happy possessors of privileges for which we have paid no price, and we also find ourselves loaded with burdens of faith and thought which are out of harmony with the spirit of our age.

To put it another way, the river of truth—if we may assume such a river—that runs on through the centuries has received many tributaries from many lands, carrying into the main stream a vast *mélange* of speculation and superstition. We find ourselves not at the headwaters of a crystal clear, uncolored stream; we are rather the recipients of a flood out of ancient times, bearing the mingled currents of all lands and all ages. It is easy, in a moment of petulance, and in a state of revolt against the crude and false aspects of the volume of thought that rolls down out of the past, to say, "a plague on the entire legacy of the centuries behind us. We will build our own thought-world and

dispense with the accumulated stock which has been transmitted to us out of the confused and uncritical past."

The heavy load of inheritance is apparent in the structure of our social order, in our prevailing economic systems, in the basic foundation of what we call civilization, and, of course, it is an inherent part of the life and thought of the Christian Church. Obviously there could be no Church without the historic past. Churches cannot be "new-born" at each critical epoch in the time-stream. They are bound to be deep-rooted in the ages behind us and to have in the very substance of their being the "deposits" of generations and centuries of human experience.

Our new generation is impatient. It wants "all things made new" to fit the new-made minds of youth. It asks why it should be bothered with the accumulation of ideas from dead centuries. "Why expect us," it says, "to spend our time on books and creeds that were written when none of the laws of the universe had been discovered and verified? Why should we listen to interpretations of life which are based on ethical and religious formulations of a world that was hoary with age at the time when modern science was born?" That attitude of impatience is an important factor in the present situation. The Churches are the conservators of the accumulated inheritance of the past and the youth of this generation are emancipated

spirits, disillusioned by the blunders of the past, convinced that science holds the key to truth and not quite willing to take the pains that are necessary to winnow out the chaff and to garner the real grain that has come down to us by transmission. As a matter of fact, life could not go on without the transmitted stock of experience.

The attitude of revolt can be only a temporary state of mind. It can be maintained only for brief periods of impulse or temper. We can no more reject the intellectual legacy of the past than we can reject the hereditary transmissions in our bodies. There are no forts and no guns on any frontiers of the world that can keep out the drift of thought and sentiment which forms the climate and atmosphere in which our young lives are formed. The past has "made us" before we begin to "make ourselves." The best we can do is to use our deepest insight and wisdom to select out of the contribution of the ages what fits in most satisfactorily with our verified truth, and with our own aims and aspirations, since under no known circumstances can a person wipe the slate clean and start entirely afresh to build his thought-world. That immemorial stream of life and truth that has poured its "deposits" on into our spiritual soil can no more be dammed back or stopped than the time-stream itself can be. Nor can any generation afford to dispense with the accumulated wisdom of the years, even if it could do so. Every item

of human experience is precious for the light it throws on the meaning and significance of life. Every tablet of cuneiform inscription, every scrap of papyrus writing, every jar or vase from the mounds and graves of lost cities, is eagerly sought because it adds to the knowledge of the long human struggle to make life a triumphant and significant thing. It is only in the light of the lessons of the past that the on-flowing stream of life can be purged and purified of its outworn detritus. It is only through patient mastery of the experience of history which has builded the Church that the Church itself which is to serve the future ages can be rebuilt. The critical attitude of the present generation toward the Church will be dealt with in Chapter V

The question which we are here raising, namely, whether there is sufficient vitality and creative power in Christianity to penetrate the new culture of this scientific age and the secular currents of life to-day with a spiritual quality and with a transforming insight is not an academic question. The issues of life and the stability of civilization hang upon the answer. It has become pretty clearly apparent that, whether men live by bread alone, or not, they cannot *live* in a world reduced to mechanism and secularism. The futility of that kind of a world breaks man's spirit and defeats his undertakings. He cannot stand the strain and stress and monotony without the refreshment and restora-

tion that come from deeper resources. He is too sensitive in the core of his being to face the agonies and frustrations of the world without the fortification which can come only from springs of energy greater than his own powers.

If he is to live a victorious life he must draw upon realms other than those of space and time. These difficulties which confront a man when the scope of his spirit is contracted are due to the very nobility of human life. And there are moments in the lives of most sane persons when the irresistible tides of life flood over all man-made theories.

## X

### *Paganized Areas of Life*

There are other difficulties which inherently attach to life in a world stripped of spiritual resources. There are probably some highborn souls who would remain clean and pure in thought and action even though they were convinced that there were no spiritual Spectator of their deeds and no Great Companion in intimate fellowship with their lives. It will usually be found, however, that such persons have formed the lines of their character in the spiritual atmosphere of the great religious tradition of the past. They have drawn upon a stock of spiritual resources which the faith of many generations before has made a quick



and vital part of the air they have breathed in their youth.

There are, however, many other persons whose moral fiber weakens and wanes away with the loss of religious incentives and with the disappearance of the inspiration of faith in eternal realities. The moral breakdown of lives that lack such inspiration and fortification is an ominous recurrence. The collapse of family life when it has no depth of spiritual soil is frequent enough to arrest attention, like an alarm bell. A contemporary writer has recently said:

Our cynicism, our lawlessness, our cleverness, our substitution of the appeal of economic determinism for the appeal of righteousness, our blurring of ethical distinctions, our shallow and showy sentimentalism, our incapacity for moral wrath—these are the precise phenomena one would expect to find in a society which has allowed the moral dignity of its individual members to be dethroned by their indifference to any life beyond this one.

We get occasional glimpses into the tragic depths of the moral chaos which follows the disintegration of faith and the stoutest person who stands on the brink and looks down into those boiling deeps gets a shudder of horror at what would happen if all the forces of moral and spiritual coherence vanished. There are areas in the social world of our time in which the naked paganism of the inner life reveals with startling effect, as in a laboratory experiment, what would

certainly happen if the rest of the areas of life were likewise paganized. A pyramid standing reversed on its apex is no more unstable than is a social civilization that has completely lost the poise and balance of a broad-grounded faith in the realities of the spirit. It has been well said that "what gravitation is to the solar system that is morality to the social life." If the moral imperatives ceased to hold and the ethical and spiritual bonds which bind men together by higher loyalties were dissolved, it is difficult to see how any worthwhile human society could survive.

The present moral confusion, like the financial confusion from which the whole world is suffering, is in large degree an aftermath of the World War. It is impossible to live for four years in an atmosphere of hate and constant slaughter, of deceit and disregard for truth, of cheapened estimates of human life, of poison gas and poison propaganda, and then to come back all of a sudden to the old stable moralities of life. The world cannot go through such a shattering moral earthquake as that and not have the very foundations of civilization shaken. When nations make a moratorium of the moral commandments, individuals will learn the lesson and proceed to take the short and ugly way to secure what they want. If the bankers and financial experts are driven to desperation to discover some way to restore confidence and to stabilize business it need not surprise us to find that a moral and

spiritual task of gigantic proportions suddenly confronts the churches and the educational institutions. The fact that Christianity in its organized forms lowered its ideals and enthusiastically "blessed" the war weakens its creative and constructive power for the crisis in which it now finds itself, but a return to clear spiritual vision and moral leadership on the part of the churches is the one hope of the hour. The only way out of the world confusion is through a clarification of spiritual vision and a recording of those moral realities on which a solid civilization can be built. That task is greater and even more urgent than the task with which the bankers are grappling.

## XI

*New Leadership for New Conditions*

With man's increased powers and his control of the forces of Nature for his own ends it needs no stern prophet like Amos of Tekoa with his plumb line to prophesy disaster to the social structure in which august imperatives no longer operate in men's souls and in which convictions of faith in immutable truth, in absolute goodness, and in undying love have faded out and vanished from the world. There are experiments in process to reconstruct civilization without the light and guidance of religion and without the living power of faith in God. There are at the same time large groups

of laboring men and women in all countries who have lost all "expectation" of creative leadership or of truly reconstructive social and economic changes at the hands of those who belong to organized Christianity. For better or for worse, they have divorced themselves from union with the Church and, giving up the thought of "a new heaven," they have turned to secular means for their hope of "a new earth, in which justice dwells." The ground of their disillusionment toward religion is their belief that religion has been a drug of the opiate type rather than a constructive force. They mean by the term "opiate" that a hypnotic dream of a far-away comfortable heaven has acted like a spell on the minds of Church people and has lulled them into quiescence in regard to the civic conditions and the injustices of life here and now, in the real world where men live and suffer.

Those who have become thoroughly awakened to the actual conditions of human life and who have formed a deep-seated passion for social and economic transformation—and there are many such—are profoundly impressed with the glaring inconsistency between the ideals of the Gospel and the dull reality which passes for Christian civilization. A kind of chilling blight falls on the spirit of a young man who has been quickened by the hopes and aims of progressive teachers, when he comes home from college and finds his Church busy with bygone issues and unconcerned

over what seem to him the most vital questions in the world. Instead of hearing about Joshua's conquest of Hittites and Jebusites, he wants light and guidance on the way to conquer the real giants and Philistines of his own time. He keeps his eye on the discrepancy between the original Christian program and the sequel of it, and he wonders how a Church, representing Christ in the world, can be so complacent and comfortable in the face of the manifest failure to apply the gospel to the needs of the world. No matter how much one tries to explain away this point of difficulty and smooth it over, it remains in the minds of many noble youth as an obstacle of first rank. It can be taken for settled that persons of this type will never be won to Christianity until its leaders become dedicated to the actual tasks for which Christ lived and died. But, on the other hand, these persons with their social passion need to be reminded that it has usually been, though not always, religious inspiration and the quickening power of faith that have produced the creators of new eras and the champions of enlarged human rights and equal justice. The inspiration lies at the very heart of original Christianity to inaugurate a new age and to build a new world for men to dwell in. If the Church *has* missed that vision, as its severest critics charge, and if it has failed to take seriously this mission of regenerating the social order it must be awakened by its prophets and be brought back to its essential task. The Church of the

future, if it is to be a living Church, must become the organ of Christ's grace and tender sympathy for those who labor and are heavy laden, and it must be supremely engaged in the work of building the Kingdom of God, not in a realm beyond the stars, but here in the cities and green fields where men toil and are weary with care and strain.

There come at certain more or less mysterious mutation epochs of history a disintegration of the accumulated stock of ideas which had beforetime always seemed as stable and reliable as the solid earth on which men walked. The period of "the Sophists" in Greece and "the era of illumination" in the eighteenth century are impressive illustrations of such mutations. They are, of course, not wholly inexplicable. A rational basis can be found for part of what happens. We can trace certain historical "causes." But at such times there are factors which elude us and elements which defy analysis. Words change their meanings. Old ideas of momentous significance cease to be any longer *alive*. Slogans that seemed to work miracles in former times fail to operate. A spell of disenchantment falls upon old-time phrases. The bottom appears to have fallen away beneath the old paths on which men once walked in security. We seem stranded between two worlds, the old one dead and the new not yet born. We are passing through such a mutation epoch now, and we all feel the element of mystery that goes with

the disappearance of old labels and the loss of trails and guideboards.

## XII

*The Hour Has Struck*

Christianity's power to survive in this present world and to be a religion of life depends upon the capacity of its prophets and guides to understand the conditions, the needs and the spirit of this new time and to reinterpret the message of human salvation and the mission of the Church in the light of the accumulated truth of the centuries and in terms of the spirit and wisdom of the Galilean Founder of this stream of life. Christianity has many times met epochs of new culture, periods of ferment and mutation, and has, through the absorption and mastery of the fresh tributary stream been able to enrich its own life and to reshape its interpretation and its mission. Can it once more prove to be equal to the situation that has emerged? Can it become enriched through the achievements of the co-operative minds of the present age and can it lead the way to a new spiritual adventure? That is the vital question we shall endeavor to answer.

If there are no basic spiritual realities to be discovered, if life is by the very nature of things bound to be a sheer biological process, with no legitimate upper story to complete it, we must, of course, face the facts

and make the best we can of our one-story compartment of life. The severely honest modern person abominates hypocrisy and sham more than most things, and he has a deep-seated dread of fancy-built additions to the realistic world. He will not save his own face, nor will he even save civilization, by imaginative supplements to the universe as it actually is. If religion is ever to be his personal comfort, and if it is to be accepted as a creative power toward a better civilization, we must find realities that are as stable as mountains for the foundations of the spiritual structure.

There will always be some persons who are content to satisfy their hopes and drown their fears with iridescent dreams, and there will be a comfortable residue who will accept unquestioningly ancient faiths just because they are ancient. But a stage of the maturing of the human mind has now been reached when henceforth a large and ever-increasing proportion of enlightened people will insist that religious truth, if it is to be truth for them, must not rest upon a less secure foundation than is adequate for any other kind of truth. The days are over, almost certainly forever over, when easy-going, jog-trot, "good-enough," faiths will hold the allegiance of the mature and solid section of our communities. The challenge is as clear as a bell. The house, as of old, must be set in order. We must face the issues of the religious life with the same honesty and the same severity of truth that we show when we



deal with the nature of atoms and the processes of the stars.

The new age cannot *live* on naturalism or on secularism. Life becomes sterile and futile without the depth and power which come from participation in eternal realities. But this new age cannot any more successfully *live* on religious faiths that are out of harmony with known truth, or that hang loose in the air, cut apart from the fundamental intellectual culture of the age. The hour has struck for the serious business of rediscovering the foundations, and of interpenetrating all life and thought with the truths and realities of a victorious religious faith.

## CHAPTER II

### A REEXAMINATION OF THE SPIRITUAL FOUNDATIONS

#### I

#### *Testimony of Experts*

WHEN one turns to examine seriously and impartially the essential ground for a disastrous collision between modern science and the foundations of faith in spiritual verities on which religion has flourished in the past, there is surprisingly little basis to account for a collapse or for a shattering of those foundations.

The President of the British Association for the Advancement of Science in his presidential address for 1931 calmly stated the sober opinion of the leaders of scientific thought in the words: "Materialism has practically disappeared. The ancient spiritual goods and heirlooms of our race need not be ruthlessly scrapped." A similar conclusion came from the International Congress of Philosophy held at Oxford in 1930 in the words: "The materialist front has broken up and scientists [are] no longer dominated by the notion that to be real is to be like a piece of matter and to work like a machine." Professor J. H. Haldane, in his *Biology and Wider Knowledge* (1931), says: "We are still

living in an age which I think our successors will look back upon with curiosity and wonder as an age characterized especially by physical realism—an age strangely blind in some but by no means all respects to what will then appear as an outstanding spiritual reality, and concealing this behind scientific abstractions which it has taken for representations of reality and proceeded to bow down before.”<sup>1</sup> The main trouble is that while the pillar thinkers of the world have seen and announced the bankruptcy of materialism there are hosts of lesser men who go on retailing materialistic theories of the universe to their students and leaving them stranded on the windy waste of speculation. It is the ancient tragedy of continued slaughter on the remoter fronts after the battle has been won and the armistice has been agreed upon by the responsible military chiefs.

As a matter of actual fact what does science undermine and what does it leave untouched? It undermines, or is likely to undermine, conclusions that have been built on primitive superstitions and mythologies. Scientific research slowly eats away these cloudland structures of imaginative fancy and they take their place with the beautiful dreams and epics of the race rather than with the solid indispensable realities of life. Such imaginative creations tell us much concerning the nature of man’s mind, but they throw very little light

<sup>1</sup> P. 114.

upon the essential realities of the world itself. Primitive theories and child-minded interpretations of the universe and of life must be examined in the light of fuller knowledge and of enlarged collections of facts, and only those theories and interpretations which bear the insignia of tested truth will in the long run abide. Grown-up people must expect to give up those things which belong to the doll-stage and the cradle habits of mankind. Such losses are not tragic; they are cleansing and purifying. It is not seemly to be playing with dolls and rattles when the dispensation of the full-grown man has come.

The present unsettlement in religion has in large measure been due to a widespread revolt on the part of young people and others against the unreal and the immature features which have survived from earlier times and which are felt to be out of place in a world that is committed to scientific explanations. So much which is heard in the name of religion sounds unreal to them that they easily fly to the conclusion that it is all alike words and imaginations.

A little more patience and penetration would convince those who take life seriously that the central realities of religion are unshaken and that only the dead husks and outer shells are being shaken off. What is bound to slough away with the increase of maturity and with the progress of exact knowledge will be those relative and temporal aspects which suit one age,

but do not fit the intellectual climate of other times. They may well drop away, as the old dead rustling leaves do when the budding germ at the spring equinox pushes them off with its growing forces operating from behind, or as the tadpole's tail disappears by being transmuted into new motor organs in the expanding life of the frog. If one can learn to discriminate between the accumulated superfluous additions that have come to seem comfortable and desirable and the consummate jewel of the soul which cannot be bartered without the loss of all that is essential to life itself, then such a person will go bravely on walking in his high places, if he feels assured that the safety of his central treasure is guaranteed.

There has been, no doubt, along with the normal ripening processes, an element of perversity and superficiality in the spirit of revolt which surrounds us. The World War with its aftermath has loosed the moorings and flung groups of young people out into uncharted seas. It is a time of yeast and ferment and there are bound to be bubbles as well as growth. It is impossible to pass through such an unprecedented catastrophe without having the stable order of thought and action affected by it. We need not, however, be too much concerned over temporary caprices and momentary mental fashions. They will pass. The real problems which religion faces to-day are from those deeper currents of maturing thought which reach down to the

roots of things. The profoundest alterations of outlook and approach that have occurred have been due to the demonstrative methods of the laboratories. Science has been speaking with enviable authority. It has rolled up an immense total of achievements. It has pushed back the skirts of ignorance at many points and in as many regions it has widened the area of light.

## II

### *Some Things Cannot Be Known from the Outside*

But as its work has progressed in the sky and earth the fact has steadily grown clearer that the exact quantitative scientific method of description and explanation cannot be applied to the entire sphere of reality. There are many aspects of this rich and complex world which cannot be exhaustively interpreted from an *outside* point of view. When such aspects are known only externally they are only partially comprehended. They are of such a nature that they are incapable of division and analysis and therefore they do not yield to exact description. The mind itself which *does* the describing and the explaining in every case cannot, for one thing, adequately be dealt with by a method of analysis and external description. There is always something more involved in the nature of mind than can be brought under any system of observation. There is something over and above the bare facts that get caught and

presented. The supreme attitudes too of a personal mind such, for instance, as conviction of truth, or joy in beauty, or awe in the presence of sublimity, or dedication to goodness for its own sake, or the personal surrender of all selfish interests for the sake of exalted love, are realities of an order quite different from changes in the orbit of a planet or from any movement of masses of matter in space. Any life-forming *loyalty* is an instance of something real and something dynamic which can be known in its true meaning only from within. When science as a descriptive method of knowledge comes face to face with the facts of religious experience it is utterly incapable of dealing with the *essential* feature of it. It studies it from the outside as an observable phenomenon, but it misses just the interior attitude of the participant that makes all the difference.

Science can show that certain temporal interpretations of facts and events in religious history are immature and inadequate and need revision. It can demonstrate that events did not happen exactly as earlier interpreters *thought* they happened and that more factors were involved than were taken into account by primitive observers. No one need be disturbed over later revisions and reinterpretations of early human experience or of primitive man's observations of his world. It would be very depressing if there were no signs of growth and advance with the process of

the years. If the methods of minute study together with the added range of microscope and telescope and spectroscope brought no new knowledge to the race it would chill us all with discouragement. If the returns of truth were all in before we were born the nerve of all our strivings would be cut by the time we cut our teeth. We may rejoice and be glad for every achievement that the laboratory can make in the field of knowledge and for every grain of truth which can be added to the accumulated gains of the centuries. We shall be better men and we shall stand more firmly on our feet for every untruth we drop out of our faith and for every superstition we leave behind as we press forward in our quest for reality.

There are, as we have seen, certain severe limitations to the range and scope of the scientific method of knowledge as it has been taken over from physics. It can deal with the facts and events of the visible universe, down to infinitesimal magnitudes and out to cosmic worlds unbelievably remote. Its range in this field seems to have no limits. But it has nothing to say, and can have nothing to say, on the question of ultimate realities of an eternal order which are essential to a spiritual religion, nor, it must be added, can such a scientific method unaided give a completely intelligible explanation of the things which it reports and describes. It cannot deal with ultimate origins or goals. If there are other positive ways of approach to such realities, or if there



are inescapable implications of a spiritual order no less real than the visible one, science has no right to close the door to it, and it has no dominion over it.

The exact scientific method in the strict Newtonian sense can have reference only to objects in space and can carry no weight of authority beyond the frontiers of its proper domain. The most that could be said authoritatively in terms of scientific knowledge either now, or in the future, would be that observed phenomena when explained and interpreted in terms of antecedent causes are bound to conform to a system of natural processes and that this system operates under an unvarying order. To assert that there are no other possible realities of any type in the universe besides those which its method can discover and describe would be an unwarranted dogmatism and would merely indicate that the individual who made the assertion had a determined bent and preference for a world composed entirely of masses of matter in space. A claim of such universal scope as that would run far beyond the range of experiment or of tested experience. It would be constructed in defiance of genuine scientific method since it applies quantitative categories and causal explanations in domains where they have no significance and it fails to take into account *all that is involved and implied by life and thought*. Too often science in the hands of its crude disciples slides over into pseudo-science and takes the rôle of the old-fashioned

dogmatist. Instead of being the carrier of man's burdens it becomes an intolerable load to be borne, like those travelers in the fable who ended their journey by carrying the beast that should have borne them.

Strict "scientific knowledge" as the expert uses it can be properly applied only to knowledge which rests on the solid basis of observation, experiment, analysis, exact description and discovery of universal aspects which can be formulated as laws. It means, further, explanation in terms of discoverable causes. It is the ideal of science to bring all its facts into a predictable system. That ideal is, however, seldom attained. It is possible of attainment, or of approach to attainment, only in fields of research where the objects that are being studied can be broken up into measurable units, and the wholes can be treated as the mathematical sum of the units or parts. Even in a world reduced to such simplicity as that, where we are busy only with units moving in space at specific velocities, we are still confronted with disturbing mysteries which no science as pure science can solve.

### III

#### *Some Disturbing Mysteries*

What, for example, is *space*, in which atoms are said to move? Even more urgent and more baffling, too, is the question, what is *time*, without which movement, or

process, becomes meaningless? What is the ultimate source and nature of *energy*, which makes movement possible? Why do atoms reveal such striking and unvarying preferences in their linkages with one another? Are molecules, which are composed of different kinds of atoms, nothing more than the sum of parts? Or has something novel and unique happened when a molecule is born? What after all is meant by a *cause*? "Cause" is a tiny word, often on our tongues. It is astonishing, however, how little we know of the real meaning of this word by which we work such miracles. A good deal of old-fashioned magic attaches to the word. The source of power in a "cause" is as mysterious as Moses' rod. Does the "cause" push and pull with coercion? Is the sequence between the "cause" and the "effect" "inevitable," i.e., something that *must* happen, and if so, what makes it "inevitable"? Where does the dynamic "drive" come from? Or do we perhaps mean by "cause" merely a "statistical account" of what we observe? Or is "cause," as William James once said, "an altar to an unknown God?" In any case, explanation in terms of a "cause" would compel a consistent thinker to ask what in turn caused the "cause" by which we explain the event. If we are severe and persistent in our search we shall find ourselves carried back in an infinite regress—a cause behind each cause *ad infinitum*. That method never brings us back to a real first cause. It turns out to be as irrational an ex-

planation of actual events as was the Indian's famous explanation of what holds up the earth. He began with the supposition of a tortoise on the back of an elephant, the elephant on the back of another elephant, and he ended with elephants all the way down!

This method of "explaining" by causes, which is quite adequate for purposes of control and prediction, is manifestly inadequate and unsatisfactory if we are bent upon finding the *ultimate* ground of truth and reality. This method of regress leaves the universe hanging loose in mid-air with no final rational support. It becomes "an insubstantial pageant." It fails to make the universe a completely *intelligible* affair. On this theory the universe has come from nowhere and it is going nowhere. We are left in the last analysis without an *origin*, without a *rational explanation*, and without any *significant goal*. Both the Alpha and the Omega fade away. It may be that we have such an uncanny universe as that on our hands, but we ought to be perfectly certain that we have sounded out all its possibilities before we resort to such a conclusion.

Beyond all these obvious difficulties there is another fundamental difficulty. Science by its method of external observation finds it necessary to regard *the mind of the observer* as though it were a disinterested spectator of facts and events, which would go on exactly the same if the spectator were not there. This spectator

mind is supposed to report what is there outside itself, like a faithful camera, without altering or coloring in the very least what is presented to it. It should be noted in passing that we are left on this supposition with no *origin* for the spectator mind, and we are offered no explanation of how such a mind can know facts that are outside itself and foreign to itself.

## IV

*The Mind Itself Must Be Taken into Account*

But when we come to grips with the facts we have no convincing assurance from any source that minds are ever of that spectator sort. It is just possible, as Kant, the major philosopher of the modern world, vigorously maintained, that the mind of the beholder is always a contributing factor, and brings important and essential aspects of construction and interpretation to the scene which it reports. It is a strange "coincidence" or something more, that the mathematical forms and principles of our human minds fit, as a glove does to a hand, the mathematical order of the vast system of the universe. We can predict the speeds of electrons and the eclipses of the sun by the same mathematics with which we calculate the amount of our humble grocer's bill. There are certain "inevitable" forms and axioms of the mind of man to which not only atoms and globules here on earth conform, but even the move-

ments of Orion and of the remotest nebula obey the same unalterable forms.

Nobody yet in the long procession of philosophers or scientists has given the least inkling of an explanation of how mind could possibly be produced by matter, or be evolved from it. The latest "explanation" is to say that it has "emerged." Mind is always presupposed in all explanations. Mind is the prius of all theories and formulations about the universe. There are no "facts or events" about which we can talk or argue, or even imagine that are not facts or events *for* minds. They are what they are because our minds have already organized and interpreted what was "presented" to us. The belief that objects, outside things and events, fall ready made upon our passive minds, as a seal would stamp wax, and are apprehended precisely as they would be in themselves, if no mind were occupied with them, is as naïve a view as was the animism of primitive man. It is another instance of cradle-minded credulity.

It requires but little serious reflection to discover that science has no magic key which can unlock all the realms of the universe, or to be convinced that science has no legitimate method by which it could deprive man, if it would, of the reality of the spiritual. If we ever lose our spiritual birthright and fall to a material and secular level it will not be due to the authoritative pronouncements of science. Science has not

closed, and will never close the soul's east window of divine surprise. We are built for two kinds of worlds—one a space-time world and one a world of spiritual values—and we can be denizens of either world. We have senses of perception that link us up with the world which science describes, and we have just as certainly inlets of connection with a world of beauty, truth, goodness, and love that can be achieved and realized only by our own creative attitudes and activities. The mind is its own kingdom, and can find its own correspondences and relationships. A very little consideration will convince any thoughtful person of the reality of this kingdom of the mind. The taproot of religion is to be found in the nature of the human mind itself, and its true environment which is an order of realities that fits the deepest nature of man's mind.

Our everyday experience reveals plainly enough to us a stream of thought and interpretation busied with our world of external facts and events. The flow of "thought and interpretation" in the mind of the beholder plainly enough belongs to a different order of reality from that stubborn external realm. The mind of the interpreter is inward and private in a sense in which the so-called "facts and events" are not. The interpretation never can be brought out into the open and looked at in the same way as we observe the facts and events which confront us. The so-called facts and events

belong to a world of common group-experience, they are there for a hundred persons to see, they conform to methods of exact description, they can be tested and verified in well-known ways, but the inward, mental interpretation, without which no experience has any meaning or significance, is there for one only. It is private, personal and "windowless" as far as any other beholder is concerned. This private, mental, personal, inner process of interpretation of our external facts and events, the consciousness of meaning and significance which forms our inner life, belongs to a "spiritual order." It is not made up of shifting masses of matter, nor is it the play of physical energies. It is a process of thought with the incontrovertible feeling attaching to it that belongs to a persistent *self*. It may very well be a fact that the process of thinking is linked up with physical processes of a brain that is composed of matter, of masses and motions and energies, but *thinking* in its essential aspects is wholly other than physical processes and can be reduced to nothing but itself. It can be dealt with properly only in terms of what it reveals itself to be, and that is, not in terms of vibrations or impacts, but in terms of ideas and insights and meanings and significance and purpose, all of which are "spiritual" aspects, since they involve *mind* and can be truly known only from within. But what is known through the private experience of a single individual is capable of test and verification through the



experience of others, and our personal convictions thus receive public confirmation.

We cannot have any external world, material or otherwise, without making our own *interpretation* of the series of facts and events that compose that outside world for us, and the "interpretation" is not one of the "events" that comes from without. It belongs to a different order from the events which we describe as external and material, for if they are "external" and "material," they are so *for us*. They are something that can be, and can be known, only where mind is operating. The *mind* of the observer must all the time be reckoned with as an essential feature in the knowledge of facts and events. What may be granted as seemingly a mere physical fact before the experience occurred is now, through the experience, lifted up, interfused with meaning and brought over into a different order of reality, namely, into a spiritual order. We can think clearly only by means of ideas, which are communicable thoughts, and we can interpret our world to ourselves and to others only through ideas, charged with meaning. The external world is, thus, all the time submitting to the mediation of an inner world which is just as real as the outside one. If we grant, as the common-sense man does, that the physical order has an existence of its own, we must, nevertheless, hold that the world as it is for us, the world that is crammed with meaning and significance, has passed through the alchemy of an

interpreting mind which is of another order of level from any kind of material process. There is plenty of ground to give us pause before we rush into unrestricted materialistic and mechanistic theories of the universe taken in its totality. It is forever impossible to crowd all that is real and true and beautiful and good into a mathematically described and causally organized world system. There are many features of the universe which *do* fit into such a mathematically described and causally explained system. But even so, that kind of a universe is not complete in itself. It is not self-explanatory. It is, as we have seen, a nest of insoluble mysteries. Such a world as that keeps demanding another kind of world to supplement and explain it, a deeper environment which is its ground of being and explanation.

V

*The Intrinsic Values by Which We Live*

When we move up to higher levels and include in the survey of our universe the processes of life, the scope and range of self-consciousness, the intrinsic nature of beauty, the absolute value of truth, the infinite worth of the good will, the unfathomable aspects of personality and the reality of a type of love which transcends all utilitarian considerations, we are confronted with a nature of things totally unlike that

which is presented to us in the best-constructed "naturalisms."

Before we undertake to raise the question whether there are realities of a spiritual nature above and beyond ourselves in the universe, it may be best to consider the undeniable spiritual pathways revealed within ourselves. The strange fact confronts us first of all that we who are so seemingly finite, ask, and are bound to ask, ultimate questions. We find it impossible to regard ourselves as chance dust wreaths whirled up from below. We cannot consistently hold that we are bits of the earth's crust, or curious shapes of cooled star waste. We are haunted with intimations of the infinite and eternal. We live out beyond the bounded and the limited. We ponder on realities which by no stretch of imagination can be thought of as made of dust, even of star dust.

The most significant thing of all in our make-up perhaps is our inescapable faith in the reality of some sort of truth. The completest skepticism that can be imagined always presupposes faith that there is something that can be called truth. If I say in my darkest moments of despair, in my lowest approaches to a dust-wreath condition, "there is no truth," "all is mad error and insane confusion," even so, I have asserted a universal statement to which I attribute "truth." My mind has organized a body of facts, and has come to a positive conclusion. In making it, as is always the case with

truth, I go far beyond anything that sense experience has reported, or ever could report. There is a downright and absolute aspect to all assertions that belong in the sphere of truth.

In this particular case, my statement is either true or false. Whether it is true or false will eventually be settled by an appeal from the mind in its narrower ranges of the moment to the mind in its more inclusive scope. All experience is an appeal to more experience. If the statement is true, we are then faced with this odd situation that "it is absolutely true that there is no such thing as truth." In the domain of logic and in the realm of truth the mind falls into self-contradiction when it denies its capacity to know and when it tries to take refuge in mere relativities. We cannot know *without knowing that we know*. In any case, all assertions of truth or of the impossibilities of truth carry universal implications and involve that strange aspect of logical necessity which we express by *it must be so*. That carries us far beyond anything a dust wreath could conjure out of its empty hat!

Materialists of all types and fashions in one breath banish everything spiritual from the universe and in the next breath claim that they know that they know. But knowledge with such ranges of universality and certainty could not possibly be got through sense-observation. There is no "sense" for *universality* nor is there a "sense" for *certainty*! There is no way that such

knowledge could get stamped in on the brain. Knowledge involves vast coherent mental processes. First of all there is the organization of observed facts, then a comparison of them and a reflection upon them. The mind seizes upon universal implications and makes a judgment of logical necessity. That far-reaching work of interpretation by the mind carries with it the glowing refutation of the claims that are made for materialism. If *truth* is real the reality of something that is spiritual irresistibly follows.

Sir Arthur Stanley Eddington in a radio address from London which was heard throughout the Western world recently made this point clear and vivid. He said that responsibility for truth is a typical manifestation of our spiritual nature. It would be the attribute that would most completely differentiate us from a mechanistic being of the robot type. The robot might have all the *outward* signs of being a man, but by no stretch of possibility could he get "the inward concern for truth such as I have." The great scientist then proceeded to draw this conclusion: "My inmost ego, possessing what I call the inescapable attribute—responsibility for truth—can never be a part of the physical world unless we alter the meaning of the word physical to spiritual, a change hardly to the advantage of clear thinking." That is the testimony of a major authority in science. He recognizes that the moment one passes over from the domain of atoms and molecules and physical ener-

gies—masses of matter in space—and discovers the conviction of truth and the capacity to know that we know, one has found an unmistakable clue to the reality of the spiritual.

Another famous scientist, Sir James Jeans, has heartily backed up this same conclusion. In *The Mysterious Universe*<sup>2</sup> he says: "To-day there is widespread agreement, which on the physical side of science amounts almost to unanimity, that the stream of knowledge is heading towards a non-mechanical reality. The universe begins to look more like a great thought than like a great machine. Mind no longer appears as an accidental intruder into the realm of matter."

## VI

### *Our Moral Imperatives*

Our moral imperatives are no less inevitable and no less absolute than our logical or our mathematical certainties. There are moments when we *see what ought to be* with a conviction as sure as our certainty that things which are equal to one and the same thing are equal to each other. This does not mean that what is right or good in one epoch of human history will always be right and good among all peoples and for all epochs of the ages. It only means that what is "morally" good is "absolutely" good, in the sense that it

<sup>2</sup> P. 158.

cannot be reduced to a utilitarian calculation, nor turned over into a profit and loss account. What is good is not discovered to be "good" because it ensures survival. It is not "good" because it promotes "safety." Persons who talk about moral goodness lightly in these terms of calculation have not felt it in its unique power nor in its most august manifestation. Loyalty to the *conviction of ought* belongs on the main line of our rationality. It is not an antithesis to reason. It is not a capricious freak of the emotions. It is not an imaginative hope. It is reason at its noblest level. It is one of man's clearest marks of inherent grandeur.

Kant found in this moral imperative, rooted and grounded in the central structure of man's being, a way to the discovery of a world of spiritual reality. He felt that the deepest experiences of his human life carried implications of a central spiritual nature within him that belonged to and partook of a universe of a different order from the one in space and time. Nothing has happened in the hundred and fifty years since Kant dropped his plummet down the moral deeps of man's inner realm to shake the spiritual foundation of this position. Kant's lumbering method of arriving at his conclusion is a curiosity of his generation and may be treated as a *détour*, but his clue to a world not made of atoms is as clear and significant to-day as it was when he first saw that this "imperative ought" in us is loaded with transcendent meaning.

Kant's emphasis on the moral will did much to exalt

the value of human personality. Two of his sayings have become classic. The first one: "Nothing can possibly be conceived in the world or even out of it, which can be called good without qualification, except a *good will*," i.e. a mind that can will the good, attributes to man at once a spiritual goal and destiny. The other saying carries in it a universal dignity for man as man: "So act as to treat humanity, whether in thy own person, or in that of any other, in every case as *an end and never as a means*."

The constant use of men for "cannon fodder" in the Napoleonic wars which followed Kant's period, and the coming of the factory system and the machine age which have perhaps in the total entailed greater agonies than even war has done, seem to defy the reality of the spiritual order announced in Kant's great maxims. But the idea that man belongs to a kingdom of ends and not merely to a world of corporeal bulks and magnitudes has never been wholly lost. New theories of man's origin from lower forms of life would naturally seem to be likely to blur Kant's noble proclamation, and for some persons it has, no doubt, done so, but on the whole, the estimate of the *absolute worth of personality*, which Kant raised to a place of primacy over everything else, has gained in standing rather than lost during the intervening years since the death of the Königsberg philosopher, a hundred and twenty-five years ago.

Some such estimate of the worth of personality lies



at the root of many of the efforts that are being made to eradicate intrenched injustices and wrongs. It is a faith like that which has produced the new sensitiveness of soul for the unnecessary sufferings and ills of humanity. Behind the movements for better care of children, for the liberation of those who toil under insufferable conditions, for sounder methods of correction and punishment of criminals and for a transformed social and economic order, there lie powerful springs of faith in the absolute worth of personality, though they are not always explicit.

## VII

*Faith in the Worth of Personality*

There can be little question that this estimate of the intrinsic worth of personality has gained in extent and in power with the flow of years. More persons back that faith with their lives now than was ever the case before. The counter ways of cheapening human life are only too apparent and seem, in a superficial review, to discount the optimism of the above statement. There are waves of banditry and outbreaks of suicide which come as a shock to our serene hopes. Life seems in such instances to count for almost nothing. A crash in the stock market is likely to be the occasion for a number of persons to throw away their lives as though they were not worth having after their visible assets are

gone. And the bandit plainly indicates that he considers a handful of money to be of more account than are the lives of those who are the owners or the guardians of the property. There are, furthermore, altogether too many movie-shows and other commercialized forms of entertainment and pleasure which cheapen life and treat persons as only means to be used for the accumulation of desirable gains. In fact, the prevailing drifts and tendencies to treat men as tools ramify far and wide and are unmistakably sinister signs of a low estimate of life.

But in former times such practices have gone almost unchallenged and they have had behind them a basic interpretation of life which considered man in his essential nature to be depraved and perverse. Men and even little children were reminded so often that they were "miserable sinners" that it became quite easy and natural to act upon the general supposition and to make that expectation real. It was always true through all the darkneses of faith that Christ had raised the absolute standard of human value, that he had announced that there is no exchange value which can be set upon a person's life and that every man is a possible child of a divine and loving Father. That stupendous vision of life, however, had sadly waned and had given place to the pessimistic account which dominated Christian thought for many centuries. There has come in our time a rediscovery of Christ's original

estimate of worth which brings Christian faith into harmony with the noblest interpretations of philosophy. Practice always runs behind theory and we need not be surprised to find that men are still far too often treated as though they were "things."

It is, however, some gain on the dial plate that such cases of treatment bring a profound "shock" to many sensitive souls in nearly every land and that the quickened consciences of a great moral army, which no one can number, are engaged in the fight for the recognition of the absolute worth of personal life. It can be said, further, that there has come to birth in the modern world a remarkable and far-reaching spirit of philanthropic good will which is a powerful spiritual agency. This man's or that man's philanthropy may possibly be traced to egoistic motives or to the desire to make a partial remedy for the ills which his business methods produce, or to the wish to lull discontent to sleep with this sop of an opiate, but in spite of all that can be said on the debit side of the account there is a mighty spirit of unselfish generosity abroad in the world that is a revelation both of the nobility in the heart of humanity and of inspiration from a higher source.

The world-wide constructive work of enlightenment and for social amelioration and for the elimination of age-old intrenched evils bring a genuine refreshment to the minds of those who follow the trails of light that lead from the central agencies in Geneva to the ends of the earth.

That faith in the worth of personality will in the long run tend to restore once more the hope of immortality. The appraisal of life as something worthy of immortality is the first step toward the discovery of solid grounds for the faith that it *will be* immortal. Cheap and shallow estimates of the worth of life cut away the basis on which any telling argument for the conservation of personality can be built. Let any person who has imaginative powers of contemplation dwell upon the august significance of a life of moral and spiritual adventure, lived in the faith that *what ought to be will be*, and it will be difficult for him to believe that these lives of ours which have such extraordinary value as ends and goals of life are to share the fate of dust wreaths and corporeal bits of earth's crust. Religion adds new grounds for this larger hope, as later sections will indicate, but there are implications in the very nature of man's being and in the moral life itself which are of momentous significance. These basic values of life, which are grounded in man's essential nature and which are in very truth spiritual realities, form a solid foundation on which religion can be built. If man is a being living in and yet above space and time, partaking at once both of the world of matter and of the world of Spirit, we need not be anxiously concerned over the future of religion. It will be perennial. Auguste Sabatier seemed to many extravagant when he said that "man is incurably religious." But if what he meant was that the roots of

religion are planted deep down in the spiritual nature of man's inmost being it was not extravagant, it was a well-balanced statement of fact.

But this chapter must not end on such an optimistic note that it leads us to forget the sinister facts which are there and the stubborn squares of black which are as real a part of our checker-board kind of world as the white squares are. The central faith of the chapter, however, is the faith which Phillips Brooks so powerfully preached a generation ago, that in the ultimate nature of things the black squares are on a white background and not the white squares on a black one.

## CHAPTER III

### THE TESTIMONY OF HUMAN EXPERIENCE

#### I

#### *Direct Approach*

IF there is to be a renewal of spiritual life and power in the modern world it will certainly have its birth in a fresh and vital personal contact with God. We live in a period which puts a strong emphasis on direct experience. We study geography by going to the countries in question. Botany and geology classes do much of their work out in the field where the actual specimens are. The empirical method, as we call it, of the laboratory seems to almost everybody the ideal way of approach to truth. Whatever field we are exploring we ask for the demonstration of facts. Science, in its large constructive sense, is no longer a series of happy guesses, it is a solidly organized system of knowledge, built upon and buttressed by observed facts. Historical research follows the same line of procedure. Its findings must be supported by actual records and documents. It is the trait and genius of our time to discount mere assertion, and to challenge deliverances which are "fulminated," or which

reveal personal bias or individual prejudice. Even in the case of the most august and sacred matters of life and destiny we want well-grounded truth, and not fancy-built hopes.

This empirical method of exploration, this appeal to experience and to facts, has come to be expected as the way of approach in religion as well as in the more external fields of research. It seems even in the first century to have been Christ's way of meeting all issues of life. In answer to questioners He is reported to have said: "*Come and see; you will find out by living, by following, by doing.*" We cannot ever, of course, deal with "the burning of the heart" and "the pluckings of the soul" which come in high moments of converse with God, by exact laboratory methods, and we shall perhaps never have a technique for spiritual communion comparable to the technique by which we measure the speed of light, but nevertheless religion demonstrably roots back into aptitudes and capacities of life and experience, and conforms to indubitable realities and principles by which it can be tested and verified. If we expect to find out why man is a religious being we must take account first of all of what happens at high-tide moments in the sphere of our own interior self. This implies no intention of reducing religion to a one-sided, man-made affair. A religion which proves to be a subjective upheaval alone is a futile performance. But we can discover the divine Other as the

goal and object of our faith only by searching carefully to see what it is that the soul experiences, what it does in its greatest moments and what type of reality it reveals itself to be in its most exalted relationships.

We risk life itself to ascend into the stratosphere, ten miles above the earth, in order to get first-hand accounts of temperature and pressure at those unusual altitudes, and to make experiments with the character of the cosmic ray before it reaches the heavier layers of air. Why should we not take some pains to find out how it fares with man's inner being on those frontier regions where the finite and the infinite join? The returns at first will obviously be meager. We may be compelled in the first instance to give account of "nothing more than what we are," but even that would prepare us for a next stage of exploration after we had faithfully sounded the deeps of our own being. We should need to speak modestly and soberly as all great explorers speak, but it is of primary importance that we should take the full measure of the range and scope of the human soul.

We have been passing through an era of financial depression which has touched everybody's life. We have, too, been passing through an even longer and more severe period of depression in reference to spiritual values of life. There has been such a widespread depreciation of the nature and significance of the human soul that it has taken and still requires strength



of character and real courage for a person to profess faith in the reality of his own soul. The time has come to break that ominous drift of depression and to re-discover our inherent spiritual assets. We need to recover once more what Tertullian at the end of the second century called "the testimony of the soul." "Whenever the soul comes to itself," he said, "as out of a surfeit or a sleep, or a sickness, and attains something of its natural soundness, it bears witness to God."

Dr. William McDougall, with his principle of "life-direction," Dr. A. J. Hadfield, with his conception of "self-ideals," and other psychologists who recognize in Man "a dynamic tendency to strive for completeness," offer a new basis for a significant testimony of the self. Rudolf Otto, with his theory of "Ahnung," by which he means a deep, obscure conviction of transcendent reality that comes to life in feeling and in will, has written a new chapter to the testimony of the inmost self.

## II

### *Many Types of Approach*

It would be a profound mistake to assume that only *one* type of experience, and that a unique one, has the sole right to be called "a direct approach" to God. In John's vision of the New Jerusalem there were gates of entrance on all sides of the four-square city. So, too,

when many persons stand on the shore of the sea in a moonlight night the path of light comes across the water straight in front of each beholder, and meets him where he stands as though he were the only one to be favored with the lane of light. It is somewhat so with the ways which lead to God. They are many in number and they are adapted to the needs and aptitudes of the different wayfarers who are to make the pilgrimage. Any way which brings a person home is a good way.

The ministry of beauty opens doors for many persons into a world they would never have found if flowers and snowflakes, stars and rainbows, mountains and sunsets had not laid their spell upon them. Music and art, poetry and song, have carried some persons up to heights they would have missed if they had not been awakened by the touch of those transmitters of light and joy. That approach is as "direct" as is any approach. Sometimes a beautiful life is more effective in its ministry than any other form of beauty could be. "The most consummately beautiful thing in the world," Professor George Herbert Palmer used to say, "is a good life," and not seldom such consummate beauty lays its hand upon us and leads us out of our old self into a diviner one.

One of the most "direct" ways to God is along the path of one's day's work, through the ministry of one's occupation or profession. If we knew the whole story of the carpenter shop at Nazareth we should find, as

Winifred Kirkland has been showing in her *Portrait of a Carpenter*, how Jesus grew in wisdom and spiritual insight and in his approach to God as he worked at his common labor and found his divine contacts through it. There are some men at the dull work of sweeping our city streets—we used to call them “white angels”—who in their desire to make the street clean and safe for the little children who play in it, or for the shops that front it, reach through their hard labor to an end of genuine service beyond it and touch, perhaps without fully knowing it, the fringe at least of an infinite love that comes to meet them as they toil. The best saints are not in cloisters; they have hands rough with toil or minds that let the saving light come through them for other lives.

It is through such souls  
God, stooping, shows sufficient of His light  
For men in the dark to rise by.

The discovery of truth along any path of search or research may prove, and often does prove, to be a “direct” way of approach to God. The fact that something out beyond us answers back to our search and meets our inquiring mind with a truth that fits it, is one of the most amazing things about our universe. It looks very much like “a double search.” It seems as though the More than ourselves out beyond us were seeking for our mind as an organ of the new truth all

the while that our mind is striving to reach through the mystery to its solution. Anyhow the pursuit of truth is never a one-sided affair. Truth, to *be* truth, must be more than *my* guess, or *my* faith, or *my* insight; it must be something beyond me that answers back to my search with an inevitable *must* be so. Men, no doubt, seek and find truth without finding God, but He is always close at hand where truth is being found.

It needs no argument to convince persons of sensitive spirits that love is a "direct" way to God. An inventor—Paul Humphrey McNeil—has produced an instrument by which a mariner can "see" the sun, even when it is hidden by clouds or fog or snow. It is an "all-weather" sextant, which detects the influence of the sun's rays even when they cannot be actually seen. A similar device for life has long been known. Love is an "all-weather" sextant for feeling the presence of God even in the midst of clouds and darkness. Here, again, there are lovers who do not see or feel the implications that go with love. They fail to reach through their private love to the infinite deeps where Love is born. Plato knew better. For him love is a temporal window opening into an eternal realm where Love dwells forever in fullness.

It is odd how often some great frustration proves in the end to be "a direct" approach to the Heart of things. It is not always so. It may break down faith and leave a soul stranded exactly when there is the greatest

need of everlasting Love. But hosts of us can give our testimony that when we were stunned or blinded or flung into a dark tunnel by some overwhelming event we discovered a healing Presence meeting us in the dark and pushing back the skirts of our darkness and restoring us into a more complete health and wholeness than we ever knew before. "A little child shall lead them." So it has been. A little child that was so divinely beautiful, so rich in promise, that he had come to be unspeakably precious and indispensable, and yet who went on and left us behind, has led some of us to the very door of the Father's house and made love a new revelation when through the darkness we found that love went right on holding across all separations and on into the invisibles.

Professor John Oman of Cambridge, an English scholar of massive mind and fine insight, has recently interpreted what he calls the "supernatural" sphere as "the world that manifests values which stir in us the sense of the holy." The word "supernatural" is used by Professor Oman, not as something miraculous, not as something foreign to our world, and not as a region above the natural world, but rather as a living, creative environment with which we are in constant correspondence and which awakens in us our experiences of value as the other environment gives us experiences of things and facts. This deeper environment is revealed

and discovered by human experience, he thinks, in ways as numerous and as convincing as is true of the environment of nature. Any way of life by which we come into the enjoyment of eternal values, such as beauty, truth, or love, and by which we are stirred with a sense of reverence for something greater than ourselves, may thus become a way to God.

Kenneth Kirk in his Bampton Lectures on *The Vision of God*<sup>1</sup> has strikingly widened out "the direct approach" in the following words:

Wherever a man's mind has been uplifted, his temptations thwarted, his sorrows comforted, his resolutions strengthened, his aberrations controlled, by the sight of purity, innocence, love or beauty,—indeed, wherever he has, even for a moment, recognized and responded to the distinction between good and evil, between better and worse,—such a man has had in part the mystical experience. Dim though his mirror may have been, he has yet seen God. Where he has seen God once there he may see Him again. Purity, innocence, love and beauty are to be seen no doubt most fully in the gospel. But they are to be seen elsewhere as well; and seeing them elsewhere we can discern their delicacies and refinements in the gospel better even than before.

If we took pains to consider what is involved in man's momentous testimony through the centuries to the reality of truth and beauty and love we should be carried out beyond those primary verities to their

<sup>1</sup> P. 464.

deeper Source, and we should at least form a profound respect for the essential nature of a being, for whom *Truth* has played such a mighty rôle. It is the depth of the soul rather than its tumult that counts, and the intimations that come from the depth of the soul are as significant as are the cosmic rays from the strata above us.

## III

*First-hand Religion*

What the hour demands is a vital return to religion as it is in its first intention. However important it may be to maintain the *transmitted* forms and types of religion as it has come out of the past, it is no less important to keep burning that unique flame of light and joy which is kindled in the soul by direct contact with God Himself. We owe much to the reports which others give us about our external world, but it would soon become a myth or a dream if we had no first-hand account through our own senses. Imagine what would happen to our apprehension of sunrise if we knew about it only in Assyrian clay tablets, or in Egyptian papyri and no one of us could ever say, "I have seen it myself!" These first-hand experiences, however, which make religion a living flame are, as we have said, of many types and not merely what happens to a person in his solitude as William James inclined to

think. I have just been hearing of a man who was instrumental in bringing about a settlement of a long and tragic coal strike. He went through what was almost like a crucifixion of suffering in his sacrificial efforts for justice and adjustment, and through this experience, not in solitude but in an agonizing social task, he discovered that absolute reality of God, as clearly as any mystic ever felt it.

These traits of our essential nature which made man a religious being in the immemorial past of the race are still alive in us and still capable of significant function. The stirring of the deeps of the soul in the presence of supreme realities, resulting in an overbrimming sense of surprise and wonder, of awe and reverence, is as unique an experience as beauty is, and it is as deeply rooted in the innate capacities of our being. The religious response cannot be explained in terms of anything else. Those traits of self-transcendence in us which carry us out beyond our material needs, and which are essential to the full enjoyment of personality, form an inalienable basis for religious attitudes. The little child, perhaps, is more naturally prone to have these first-hand experiences of awe and wonder, these overbrimming moments of life, than older persons are. The poets are right in believing that the child is, in some mysterious way, nearer the open door into the Infinite than the rest of us are. George Macdonald strikingly expressed the child's response in his simple



lines which beautifully catch the child's state of mind:

I am a little child, and I  
Am ignorant and weak.  
I gaze into the starry sky  
And then I cannot speak.  
For all behind the starry sky,  
Behind the world so broad,  
Behind men's hearts and souls doth lie  
The infinite of God.

It is, however, possible to recover the child's "innocence of eye," to become like a little child again. Michael Fairless in *The Roadmender* tells of a child from the slums, who, after listening to the spell of organ music, put up his face to be kissed by the hardened old organ grinder; the organ grinder swore at the child and struck him a blow, at which the child ran away in fear. A few days later the organ man met with an accident and lay for days in a hospital where he was all the time haunted by the memory of that upturned face. As soon as he was well again he went in search of the child that tried to kiss him, playing the tunes which always drew the children out of the alleys to his organ. He never found the child whom he had repelled, but in his loving search for him he became kind and gentle, loving and noble in spirit, and the author of the book says of him: "He saw the face of a little child and looked on God." It is exactly what would happen to

anyone who recovered the child-spirit and it is what has happened to many of us.

States of mind of the type of awe and wonder and overbrimming joy, however, are not confined to little children, or at least would not be so limited if we could learn how to preserve and carry on through life that primitive sensitiveness of soul to the deeper world of Spirit with which we are allied. The walls that separate the child from this closely environing world are very thin and he "can travel thither" with ease and naturalness, but the locking up of life by habit, the tendency to focus on external things, the growth of the acquisitive attitude, the loss of expectancy and simplicity make the walls thicker and less pervious. The real cure for the disease of secularism, and the way to conquer the fears that go with it will best be found in the recovery of that expectancy and simplicity.

#### IV

#### *The Door Open*

Anker Larsen, the Danish novelist, who has beautifully interpreted his own meetings with the eternally Real, not in a far-off country, but here in the midst of time, has very happily characterized two well-known types of child:

Look at the youngster over there in his little wagon—his babbling lips, his striving, struggling arms and legs, the fin-

gers forever grasping at something. Does he not differ from us grown-ups merely in that our hands are grasping more firmly, are reaching farther and that we know how limited their range is? Yes, he is a *small grown-up*, and often worse than the fully developed adult, because life has not yet administered a good sound box on the ear to the spoilt child who coolly assumes, therefore, that the whole world revolves around him. He is an unqualified expression of this temporal life.

But come over to the wagon at another time—there lies the little fellow quietly, in a peace we do not understand, but which moves us. His eyes look as if he knew far more than we grown people could ever experience. He is able to keep on lying thus, in a rest and peace which is denied to most of his elders. If in this repose a smile comes to his lips, one almost sees an angel smiling. I believe that is the direct, unconcealed smile of Eternity.<sup>a</sup>

Anker Larsen has, in his little book from which I have quoted, given a simple, natural and convincing account of his own experiences of the discovery of the eternal in the temporal, and of the way the temporal realizes, or may realize, the eternal. He has given a revealing instance of one person who has carried "the child's smile of eternity" on through the years of his adult life, one person who has not lost the Tree of Life here in the midst of the garden of earth. It would be difficult to find anywhere a more vivid personal passage describing the joy of what he calls the experience of "the Eternal Now" than in his book, *With the Door Open*.

<sup>a</sup> *With the Door Open*, pp. 76-77.

I have always had [he says] a healthy appetite for all the pleasures of life, and I have no reason to complain even now, either about the appetite or the digestion—but if I had all the food in the world in one dish, all the wine in the world in one glass, all its tobacco in one cigar, all the women under one petticoat, and all the honors of all the kings conferred upon me in one decoration, and the promise, in addition, that I should have all these things continuously, if only I were willing to renounce the possibility of experiencing again those meetings with the eternal Now, and the illumination of life which they bring—I would laugh heartily and throw the whole collection of trinkets on the dunghill. If I have forgotten anything else one might cover, I throw it after the rest without looking at it.\*

Those who have kept the child-minded spirit unspoiled and who have “gone the whole way” on into this life which fuses the eternal and the temporal into an unbroken unity—persons like Jesus and Francis of Assisi and Brother Lawrence—always tell us that life is so saturated with joy that no amount of pain or sacrifice can spoil it, and that there is no exchange value by which its worth can be estimated.

Brother Lawrence, to begin with, was “a great awkward fellow, that broke everything,” but with an unusual simplicity and naturalness he entered so completely into reciprocal communion with the Life of God and learned how to practice the Presence of God so normally that joy became his constant and habitual state of mind. He formed a fixed resolve, saying to

\* *Op. cit.*, pp. 82-83.

himself: "Whatever becomes of me, whether I be lost or saved, I will always continue to act purely for the love of God." "From that time on," the simple narrative says, "he passed his life in perfect liberty and continual joy."

The friend who told his humble story has given this charming picture of the drudgery of his life in the kitchen and of the way he changed drudgery to glory. "In his business in the kitchen (of the brotherhood) to which he had naturally a great aversion, having accustomed himself to do everything there for the love of God, and with prayer on all occasions for God's grace to do his work well, he found everything easy during the fifteen years that he was employed there." Then comes this striking testimony to the reality of the eternal Presence in the midst of the temporal sphere: "With him the *set* times of prayer were not different from other times. He retired to pray according to the directions of his Superior, but he did not want such retirement, nor ask for it, *because his greatest business did not divert him from God.*" There is presented an impressive case of a busy man, occupied with the things of the world, doing work of drudgery, and yet keeping the spirit and joy of the child in his unspoiled Eden. He feels no need for special times of organized and directed religious devotions, for his whole life in its ordinary round of toil and duty had become a perennial practice of the Presence of God, a joyous fusion of eternity and time.

This does not at all mean that organized forms of religion are unimportant and may be dispensed with, but the instances here given do indicate the reality of religion as it is in its first intention, religion as direct intercourse and relationship with God who becomes here and now a real Presence. In this respect religion closely corresponds to the enjoyment of beauty.

Nobody would consent to have congealed descriptions and formal accounts of lovely objects and beautiful creations substituted for the experience of beauty itself. The moment beauty is reduced to pattern-stamped accounts of it, the moment one tries to convey it in words and formulæ its essence is lost and it is turned from a thing of joy to a thing of dullness. Imagine how powerfully our minds would revolt from any attempt to settle once and for all and for everybody what the standards of beauty must be, exactly when and how the appreciation of beauty must operate and before precisely what objects the joy might be expected to radiate. We want *surprises*. We desire to live in a world where beauty is an essential feature of it and where it may burst in on us at any minute unregimented and unheralded.

Religion, too, must be kept as an open door for the soul into the world of absolute and eternal reality with which we have commerce. It must be as fresh as dew, as free as the migrating bird, as unpredictable as life itself. It is essentially the soul's response to that divine Other, that spiritual Beyond, that completes and fulfills

our native yearnings and strivings after true reality. There is no sound reason why the restoration of the soul and the burning of the heart should not be as real and as frequent as are our exaltations over gleams of unwonted beauty.

When Rudyard Kipling was lying at the point of death many years ago in a New York hospital and all hope of recovery seemed to be gone a nurse bent over and asked him if he wanted anything. "Yes," he whispered, "I want my heavenly Father." There in that spontaneous expression is revealed the simple, natural mind of the little child breaking in and exhibiting itself. Whenever we come back to the native surge of our truest self we discover that we want our Father.

Joseph Twitchell used to tell how once on a camping trip in the Adirondack Mountains with Horace Bushnell, who was one of the foremost of all the spiritual leaders of American life and thought, Bushnell on the slopes of Mount Marcy prayed in their tent at bedtime one night so simply and so naturally, and with such apparent certainty of the near Presence of the Person to whom he was talking, that God seemed close beside them. Dr. Twitchell, in telling of this experience to his friend, Mark Twain, used to say that every time during that night when he reached out of bed with his arms it seemed as though he *touched God*. Why should not one feel so, if he has not by his blunders and stupidities lost the Tree of Life out of his garden!

There come, as we all know, days of unusual visibility when distant mountains, far-away spires and objects generally merged in with the horizon become clearly, perfectly seen and look surprisingly near. We wonder as we see the horizon expand and take in an immensely enlarged area of view whether the change is in us or in our world. There are days of enlarged spiritual visibility also when the boundaries more or less vanish. We are no longer cabined, cribbed and confined in our tiny domain. We breathe as though a window had opened into a new dimension. The soul expands with life and is restored like a child feeding on its mother's breast. There is a unique buoyancy of spirit as though an unwonted tide of life had come in under us.

v

*Buoyancy of Life*

The moment a person discovers the buoyancy of water he becomes forthwith a swimmer. The beginner defeats his efforts because he supposes that it is the natural thing for the body to sink in the water. He assumes that he is likely to go to the bottom and drown if he risks himself in it. He starts out on his timid venture with a defeative state of mind. But by an act of bold experiment he finds some day that the water holds him easily and conveys him onward if he exerts himself. And with one heroic leap he becomes from



that moment a swimmer. It is so too with the experience of finding the eternal in the midst of the temporal. Something happens on some sudden occasion that awakens in us those slumbering capacities which bring us into vital relations with "a World within the World we see," but of which we had until then only the dimmest suspicions. The heroic leap of confidence is as important for the seeker for God as it is for the swimmer. And the discovery of buoyance is as important in one case as it is in the other. Expectancy comes as near working miracles as any state of mind does.

The experience of contact with a divine Presence, and with it the discovery of a buoyancy of life, are experiences which are as old as the race. The statement that "Enoch walked with God" comes out of the early Hebrew records. Something like it appears wherever we get early records of human experience. Whenever we get a glimpse back into the dawn of human history we find along with hunters and implement makers and creators of arts and crafts, spiritually buoyant persons who had made their heroic plunge and who had discovered that Something besides the solid earth could hold them and give them fortification to live by. The mystic and the prophet are as old as the tent-makers and it may be that they have been as important for the life and development of the race.

Moses is not the first of those who saw "Him who is invisible" and in the power of his vision went out to

build a new civilization. The Philistines had the best land in Palestine and the future seemed to be with them, while Abraham, the father of a unique race, settled on the unpromising rocks of Hebron, but Abraham could see divine visitors coming to his tent door, while the Philistines throughout their entire history remained "too blind to have desire to see" any invisible realities. There is no question now in the long perspectives of time which of the two races was in the line of selection as a chosen people for the business of making a spiritual contribution to the life of the world.

## VI

### *Man's Spirit a Shining Light*

A remarkable phrase which at its birth expressed a profound personal experience was caught up and embedded in that collection of practical wisdom and everyday common sense, the Book of Proverbs. It declares that "The spirit of man is a candle of the Lord." It must have circulated from man to man in common speech before it was set like a gem in this ancient book. It represents something more than the testimony of a solitary individual. It bears the marks of communal experience. It means in the simplest interpretation of it that there is something in man's inmost spiritual nature which can be kindled and struck into flame by God, and that as a man feeds the flame with his life he

becomes a revealing-place for God. His spirit burns as one of God's centers of illumination in the world. One of the Sufi poets of Persia in a similar phrase said:

Every heart that has slept one night in Thy air,  
O God, is like radiant day.

As far back as we can make our soundings into the life and thought of the early Aryan race in India we get the same testimony from man's soul. The Vedic hymns utter in primitive form a profound faith in the reality of a divine Presence breaking in on man's life, bringing spiritual vision, divine illumination and creative power. When we pass over to the later and more intellectual Upanishads we find a noble and sustained confidence in the soul of man as the pathway upward to the eternal Reality.

Eight hundred years before Christ a certain king asked an Indian sage to tell him "what is the light of man." "The sun, O king," the sage replied, "for having the sun for his light man sits, moves about, does his work and returns." "But when the sun is set, O Yojnavalkya, what is the light of man?" "When the sun is set, then the moon is the light of man; for having the moon for his light man sits, moves about, does his work and returns." "But when the sun is set, and the moon is set, what is the light of man?" Yojnavalkya answered: "When the sun is set and the moon is set, then fire is the light of man; for having fire for his light man sits, moves about, does his work and

returns." "But sun sets, moon sets and fire goes out. What then is the light of man?" The ancient sage gave this reply: "When the sun is set, and the moon is set, and the fire is gone out, *the soul is the light of man.*"<sup>4</sup>

The great note which the sages of China sounded clearest was the reality of the moral order of the universe. "The moral law," Confucius said, "in its utmost reaches reigns supreme over heaven and earth. It is this—one system running through all—that makes the universe so impressively great." But while that moral order held the primacy in the thought of Confucius as "the great root of the world" he felt a sense of awe as he considered the vast and inexhaustible deeps of man's soul and its relations with silent and hidden spiritual forces in the universe. "Like the rush of mighty waters," he declared, "the presence of unseen Powers is felt, sometimes above us and sometimes around us."

In the third century of our era Plotinus, the last major thinker in the succession of great Greek philosophers, proved to be one of the world's foremost prophets of the nobility of the human soul as it finds itself in direct relation with God. "The Holy Place, the fountain-head of Beauty," according to his thought, "is within man." "Man's dear Fatherland" is not reached by coaches nor by chariots, nor in ships, but by the awakening of the soul to "a vision which is its own birth-right." "A stream from the divine Fount flows through man's own soul."

<sup>4</sup> *Brihadaranyaka*, Upanishad IV. 3.

I will give one more testimony from the great throng of poets and seers of the ancient world, this time from a Mohammedan mystic who had probably felt the inspiration of Plotinus.

Go sweep out the chamber of your heart,  
Make it ready to be the dwelling place of the Beloved.  
When you depart out, He will enter in,  
In you, void of yourself, He will display His beauty.

As soon as we come over into the central stream of Christian experience and thought there is an almost unbroken line of testimony to the reality of man's direct approach to God. The emphasis on theology and doctrine and on imperial organization has been so strong that the quiet flow of this "hidden stream," running like the rivers Abana and Pharpar underneath the city of Damascus, has often been missed, but nevertheless it is really there all the time. The great saying of Christ, "the Kingdom of God is in you," may be taken as a headwater source of this stream of mystical life. What is too often missed as we read the original story in the Gospels is the note of joy and the thrill in life itself which is there for those who have eyes to see it. Christ brought *life* to the first place in attention and emphasis. There is in His thought no substitute for life, if so be the life that one is living is rich and abundant. He always sees life in its potential significance and glory. The little child becomes infinitely precious and wonderful. Lilies and birds and germinating

mustard seeds suggest ranges of life that have no earthly frontiers. A prodigal son who "comes to himself," a sinful woman who is awakened to the full meaning of love, an impulsive fisherman who is turned into stable-rock character, reveal the true line of the spiritual unfolding of life which makes the Gospel such a marvelous narrative. Any kingdom that Christ builds is sure to be a *kingdom of life*.

St. Paul's words in Athens, "In God we live and move and have our being," are as positive a declaration as words can make that religion begins, however it may end, as life itself does, in direct mutual and reciprocal correspondence with the Life of God. One of the latest interpreters of the same truth, the English poet, Francis Thompson, compared this intimate, vital connection between the soul and God to that of the fish with the ocean in which it swims, to that of the eagle with the air in which it flies:

Does the fish soar to find the ocean?  
Does the eagle plunge to find the air?

The Gospel spoken at Jacob's Well was of this same type. It brought religion out of slavery to forms and places and attached it directly to a state and attitude of soul: God is Spirit and His true worshipers meet with Him and commune with Him *spiritually and in reality*.

St. Paul's Ægean Gospel, as we find in his Epistles,

expects every individual person to become a living temple, certainly a new kind of temple quite unlike the seventh wonder of the world built to enshrine Diana of the Ephesians. "You are temples and the Spirit of God dwells in you." "You are builded together for a habitation of God through the Spirit." We have heard these exalted statements so often that they have become common phrases and they slide over our minds without awakening us to the wonder and the daring that are hidden in them. What a Christianity the world would have seen if the Ægean Gospel had remained the live reality which beat and throbbed in the heart of this spiritual conqueror of the Ægean cities.

Irenæus was overbusy in his world of the second century fighting heretics and the drift of strange heresies, but the original stream of life in a measure flowed on through him. He was speaking out of his own experience when he said: "*The glory of God is a living man and the life of man is the vision of God.*" Clement of Alexandria was telling of his own experience when he declared that "Christ has turned all our sunsets to sunrises."

"Thou hast made us for thyself and our hearts are restless until they find rest in Thee," is the way another one of these first-hand witnesses announced the two stages of his life, the stormy, baffled, beaten period of searching and sinning on the one hand and the peace and joy of the second period when this Carthaginian

man of the world became transformed into the St. Augustine who "willed entirely to have God," and who "in one trembling flash" found Him.

"There are as many revelations of God as there are holy souls to be revealers of Him," is the testimony of Irish John usually called Erigena who, in the ninth century, went to France to lay the foundations of French education. This great scholar in the darkest period of the dark ages became one of the important transmitters to later centuries of the spiritual heritage which came from the stream of Platonism and which again and again reawakened and refreshed the Western world.

Joachim of Fiori in the twelfth century, speaking as a prophet of the Spirit, announced the birth of "the eternal Gospel," by which he meant the dawning of an epoch in which religion would become a life of complete health and joy in the ever-present Spirit. The "spiritual Franciscans" always believed that it was the mission of their beloved St. Francis to inaugurate this epoch of spiritual health and joy, the era of new radiance, an era marked by a unique spirit of love and fellowship. Like his great Galilean Master, Francis once more restored *life* to the first place in interest and attention. It is a mistake to think of him as an ascetic person, killing out the beauty and joy of life, for just the opposite is the fact. He took the path of poverty as the way to freedom and to the full realization of the



divine possibilities of life, not as a hard last resort to save his soul. His joy is as natural as a bird's song and his life shows the touch of genius which reveals the poet and artist as well as the saint. If one wishes to find a buoyant swimmer living in the thrill and joy of the eternal Life, there is no better instance of it than that of this Umbrian saint.

The Friends of God in the Rhine valley in the fourteenth century exhibited in high degree this intense first-hand type of religion, expressed in life and service, in faith and practice, in joy and radiance. "I would fain be to the Eternal God," one of them said, "what a man's hand is to his own life." Another one of them declared in the period of the suspension of all Church services and functions during a pitiable interdict: "Although the Church can take from us the external sacraments, no one can take from us the spiritual joy which comes from union with God and inward joy from partaking freely of the body and blood of Christ." A third Friend of God, Meister Eckhart, the "father" of the movement, said out of his own heart, "Nothing is so close to me as God. He is nearer to me than I am to myself."

## VII

### *The Soul a Center of Eternity*

The Reformation had so many aspects that one can find in the sweep of its movement almost anything

one *desires* to find, but there is no mistaking the fact that Luther put his primary emphasis on the saving power and transforming effect of inward personal faith as a living thing. The way to a new life lies in the attitude and resolute will of the individual soul. The Reformation was an awakening to the majestic significance of the human soul. New dogmatisms were born, new ecclesiasticisms were set up and new alliances of Church and State were formed, but the deepest current of life and thought of the Reformation epoch was the significance of the soul's own attitude. All victories that are won in the world are first won within in some person's soul.

Thomas Traherne in the seventeenth century expressed in noble fashion this Protestant faith in the spiritual dominion of the soul: "You are never your true self," he said in his *Centuries of Meditation*, "till you live by your soul more than by your body, and you never live by your soul until you feel its incomparable excellence . . . as a centre of Eternity."

The Counter-Reformation in the Roman Catholic Church produced a wave of mystical life which has no parallel except possibly in the fourteenth-century movements. Abbé Bremond has taken six huge volumes to tell the story of this first-hand spiritual awakening in France alone. In St. Teresa and St. John of the Cross it reached an even greater height in Spain. Jacob Boehme, George Fox, William Law, Jonathan Ed-

wards, John Woolman, Horace Bushnell, William Wordsworth, and Ralph Waldo Emerson are striking interpreters of this stream of mystical life in Protestant circles. But it would take volumes to make the list of names complete, for besides those who have possessed a literary gift and who have expressed their experiences for others to read there have been thousands who were nameless and unvocal, but who have lived in the power of unseen realities and have practiced the presence of God in their daily walk and conversation.

As torrents in summer  
Half dried in their channels,  
Suddenly rise, though the  
Sky is still cloudless  
For rain has been falling  
Far off at their fountains;

So hearts that are fainting  
Grow full to o'erflowing,  
And they that behold it  
Marvel and know not  
That God at their fountains  
Far off hath been raining.

## VIII

### *Upward and Outward*

We may take it for granted that the religion of the future, so far as it is creative, dynamic and transform-

ing, will be at heart mystical, its evidence and authority will lie in an inward conviction of reality, in the discovery of a power to live by and in direct fortification for the tasks of life. We do not forget the importance of what is called "the social gospel." No gospel that is to touch and minister to the whole of life can ever cease from now on to be a *social* gospel. But the horizontal social gospel from man to man must never become a *substitute* for the soul's personal upward relations with God as the source of inspiration and power, though both the upward reach and the horizontal way of life are as essential for religion as are the systole and dyastole of the heart for circulation. There is always danger of attaining inclusive breadth of life without a corresponding height and depth to it. It is possible to have a passion for social and economic reconstruction and still to leave life thin and quite devoid of creative and dynamic resources. A being that is made for intercourse with God and for correspondence with Him can never reach his full stature merely by improving his adjustment to his physical environment, or by increasing his social adaptations. This mystical aspect of life in no sense means a rejection of the immense inheritance from the historical stream of Christian life and thought, nor does it mean the glorification of the solitary individual and the elimination of the mission of the Church, as the next two chapters will show. It means that vital

religion can live and flourish and progress in a complex environment, such as the social and intellectual world has become, only by fresh, renewing, direct contacts with the life of God.

The conception of a remote, absentee God is utterly dead. We have not yet attained to an adequate spiritual interpretation of God so that our imagery of Him can be as vivid and real as was the case under the older conceptions, but for most of us there is found to be both within the universe and within ourselves, a deeper World of Spirit, our Source and Ground of being and the essential Environment of any life that has spiritual scope and significance. To live and breathe and grow is to correspond with God. The spiritual experts have always known it. The time has come for the rank and file which make up the spiritual force of society to know it and to practice it.

## IX

### *Technique and Method*

Many will no doubt feel that they need a system, a well-defined technique as a training and preparation for this quickening experience of God. India has its system of Yoga by which the Hindu saint is trained and disciplined for the life of meditation and the great mystics of the Middle Ages had a systematized method of steps and approaches by which they climbed up to

their highest moments of unutterable union. But experiences of this exalted type can never be reduced to set form and regimentation, nor can they be gained by a fixed system or a scientific technique. There is a close parallel between poetic experience and experiences of the mystical type. They both draw heavily upon swift flashes of intuition. The antennæ of the soul seem suddenly to reach out beyond what has been ordered and explained. The thing which counts most for such processes will be frequent periods of hush and quiet when the deep-lying strata of the self come into function and operate as they seem to do, in conjunction with a Reality beyond our own margins. The removal of obstacles and hindrances is more important than is the invention of artificial contrivances to aid the soul to accomplish what belongs to its native capacities.

It is not so much technique that is needed as patience and expectancy. Confidence in the range and power of the soul, faith in the nearness and kinship of God, and simple trust in the buoyancy of the great Ocean that surrounds our souls are almost certainly the most important attitudes of mind. Many persons find corporate silence more effective than solitary silence, though this is by no means a universal experience. The hush and expectancy of many coöperating together seem often to have the cumulative effect of teamwork and to bring the individual into the best condition for this higher type of correspondence.

In the past the spiritual culture of home life and the prayer habit, where they existed, have been strong influences in the formation of expectancy. Where little children have grown up in an atmosphere shot through with an experience of real Presence and of creative faith in the nearness of God, and where the radiant life of the family has borne a powerful testimony to the reality of God, no other technique seemed necessary. But where such natural and unconscious spiritual nurture is absent, as it too often is absent to-day, the Church finds its task in this direction greatly increased, and it must be taken as settled that this type of nurture in the future belongs essentially to the function of the Church. Hardly anything in the sphere of religion stands more in need of attainment by the rank and file of Christians to-day than does the spontaneous natural and joyous *practice of prayer*. It has too often grown dull and meaningless and has finally for many persons dropped away as an empty performance. If Christianity is coming back in living power in our lives we must have vital correspondence with God in prayer and communion.

It may be said with complete assurance that sensitiveness to the moral issues and implications of life is of the highest importance for the personal discovery of God. The relation between ethics and religion is so intimate that many writers have treated these two aspects of life as identical, or at least as two flowers from a single root. Christ put the love of God and

love of neighbor together into one fundamental duty of man, as though the upward love for God and the outward love for man formed one single spiritual whole. So, too, Christ set forth purity of heart as the essential condition for seeing God. Purity of heart in this great beatitude no doubt means more than freedom from immoral taints. It is simplicity and singleness of heart, elimination of prejudice and hardness. It is primarily *capacity for love*, but however we define it, the fact remains that the vision of God is directly bound up with ethical traits and qualities of life. All the experts are further agreed that love of beauty and loyalty to truth are also inevitably linked with this religion of direct and immediate approach to God, as breathing and heart-beating are indivisible parts of the natural function of life.

The richness and exuberance of life in the great birth period which follows the spring equinox, as contrasted with the barren stretch of winter months, may perhaps furnish us with a parable of the difference between the full life of correspondence with God and the well-known arid stage of life which sets in when the door to the Beyond is shut and the magic casements which admit the soul's upper air are tight closed. It is possible, no doubt, to "survive" so long as lungs keep breathing and heart keeps beating, but life—life of the thrilling and adventurous type—needs larger horizons and wider ranges of correspondence.



## CHAPTER IV

### THE HEART OF CHRISTIANITY

#### I

#### *Things That Cannot Be Shaken Remain*

SOMETIME near the end of the first century, in the midst of earthquakes, shattering disasters, and depressing uncertainties, an unnamed Christian writer, looking out on the turmoil and upheaval, calmly declared that the shaking processes which were disturbing the world had the significance of a genuine revelation. "The things that are being shaken," he announced, "are obviously things that *can be shaken*. They are thus revealed to be man-made, passing and temporal things by the very fact that they are shaken, and they are being removed out of the way, so that *the things which cannot be shaken* may remain."<sup>1</sup>

There are recurrent periods in history which have this testing and sorting function. They are always disturbing times to live in. They try men's hearts with fear and anxiety. They seem to threaten the very foundations underneath the solid structure which the ages have built. It is difficult for those who are living

<sup>1</sup> Hebrews XII. 27.

through the shaking process to distinguish between the outworn, temporal aspects which ought to be removed, and those eternal verities which will be still standing as solid as ever when the shaking is over.

We are in one of these testing periods now. The seismograph is working overtime and keeps reporting serious "shakings" abroad in the land. There is a disturbing quantity of débris being removed. The fearful and timorous wonder whether "anything will be left." The Rock of Ages seems to them to be dissolving. They are in the desperate straits of the travelers with St. Paul who found themselves in the sea on "planks and broken pieces of the ship."

We may be assured that this testing, sorting time is, once more, a revealing period. It is demonstrating, as earthquakes always do demonstrate, what is built to abide through shakings and what is only makeshift work to be removed. There is, we may be assured, an unshaken and unshakable foundation of truth and reality which is of an eternal order. We want to discover that.

## II

### *What "Christianity" Means*

"Christianity" is a word of many meanings. It is often used to cover what we indefinitely call Western civili-

zation and in accord with that superficial use of the word, the nations which make up that civilization are frequently called "Christian nations." "Christendom" thus includes all the regions of the earth that are in some measure under the sway of ideas and ideals which have come to be called "Christian" in the loose sense of the above-mentioned type of civilization. As soon as one turns to consider the characteristics of this type of civilization called "Christianity" the fact is quickly revealed that it bears very slight resemblance to the way of life presented in the Gospels. It is the product of many strands of thought and life and culture. In other words, Christian civilization is the confluence of many streams.

That is exactly as we should expect it to be. The historical movement is immensely complex and cumulative. No nation, no race, no people, has ever lived unto itself alone, nor can it be done. Contacts are bound to happen. Influences flow in like tributaries to a river. Every time one civilization, or one culture, conquers another one, there is a reciprocal interaction which alters conqueror and conquered alike. Again and again in matters of culture the conquered have been, in the end, the conquerors, the captor has been led captive. Every time the Christian forces have conquered a civilization or culture, a national or racial system of life and thought, Christianity has in its turn been altered by the "conquest." The "defeat" of the mystery reli-

gions and of Gnostic movements by Christianity in the first two centuries was by no means a one-sided victory. The "conversion" of Constantine and the "triumph" of Christianity over the Roman Empire was a "victory" in which the spoil was woefully divided. A corresponding conquest of the Christian conquerors has marked every "invasion" which Christianity has made upon the culture of any people throughout its two thousand years of history. Christian civilization is, therefore, by no means a river with a single source. On the contrary, it drains swamps and morasses and remote watersheds as well as that high Galilean tableland from which the original stream emerged.

If we are to go on calling Western civilization "Christianity," we must keep clearly in mind what an enormous fusion and complex it is. The philosophy of Greece, the organizing genius of Rome, the customs and mental habits of Goth and Frank and Saxon have poured in and have helped to form the civilization and culture to which we give the name of Christianity. Reformers in all periods have endeavored to "return" to the purity and simplicity of the original source. They have aspired to "revive primitive Christianity." The difficulty about such an undertaking is the impossibility of lifting a spiritual movement out of its organic, historical setting and transporting it into the life and culture of another epoch. "A way of life" cannot go on in a vacuum. It cannot be disembodied. It is bound

to express itself in the concrete terms of an existing civilization and culture.

If we are to "follow Christ," it will not be over Galilean hills, nor shall we do it with sandals, or in the Palestinian garments of the first century. Nor can we think about our universe, or of our national aims, or of our social duties, in the terms of Galilean peasants and fishermen. For better or for worse—it is almost certainly for better—we are the inheritors of Western civilization and the scientific culture of the twentieth century and sharers in it. We cannot "go back" to an earlier purity and simplicity. No "return" journey is possible. The only direction of travel that is open to us is the one-way road forward and if we are concerned to get closer to the original quality of Christian faith and power it must be by discovering what were the essential aspects of that faith and power, and by going forward to reconstruct and rebuild our culture and our civilization through the recreative energies of that dynamic way of life. Those "essential aspects of faith and power" which constituted the driving energy or the creative element of the Galilean way of life is what is meant by the phrase, "the heart of Christianity." It is that nucleus of faith or truth which underlies all genuine types of Christian discipleship. It is that essential element of faith around which all the branches of the great Christian family gather. It is the center of loyalty that in all lands and centuries differentiates

Christian from non-Christian. It is the common inheritance shared by every sect or creed or name which roots back for life and power into the original Source of the Christian stream.

### III

#### *Is the "Heart" Still Beating?*

Is there "a heart of Christianity" still beating underneath all the visible variations, all the talk, all the form and show, all the pumped-up effort, all the committees and conferences and retreats, and prayer-meetings and revivals? In the midst of the staggering secularism and externality, the seeming deadness and dullness, is there a heart that throbs with life? Is there a current of vitality, still dynamic with the power of God? Is there a *faith* that can still raise the dead and set men to the task of overcoming the world? Is that Name, which was once held to be above all names, able even now to quicken and revitalize the spiritual pulse of humanity? Is there a driving energy at the heart of Christianity which can, not only build hospitals and centers of repair for broken lives, but that can, in fact and reality, transform and reconstruct the social and economic order which has become inadequate for the life of men to-day? Is there something vital enough in quality and power at the heart of this faith of ours to warrant our carrying a message and a way of life to other nations

and races beyond our borders? Have we a missionary faith which gives us a right to be a missionary people? *Are we more than conquerors*, in the sense that we have an overbrimming spiritual life which flows over for others? Does our cup run over?

These questions are serious ones to face and yet they must be faced. We have no claim to be purveyors of truth and light to the people of other lands if we are spiritually bankrupt ourselves. If religion in the homeland is in word but not in power, we need not be surprised to find that our workers out on the far frontiers grow weak and discouraged and ineffective. The moment the great tides of the life and love of God flow through us over here with creative and redemptive power, that same tide will run high in the ranks of those who are far away on the other side of the world.

Let us endeavor to recover for our thought that central conquering faith which lay at the heart of primitive Christianity, when it first became *apostolic*, which literally means "missionary." It was on its highest level a new revelation of God, and it was on the human plane an equally new revelation of man's potential nature. We have not got back to the heart of Christianity until we have recovered both of these essential aspects of Christ's life and message. They are so indissolubly woven together that either one is apt to be missed if the other is overlooked, as has too often happened in the course of Christian history. But for Christ

himself, the character-nature of God could not be thought of in the abstract, apart from the human branches through which the divine life is poured, nor could human nature rise to its normal spiritual potency until the life of God flows through it. His "way of life" included contact and expansion upward as well as complete adjustment through right social relationships down here.

#### IV

#### *The Unique Aspect*

Every great religion, that is, every religion that has made a permanent contribution to human culture and civilization, has brought to light some unique aspect of the nature of God. In fact, a religion is only a phase of "humanism" until it becomes deepened and vitalized through a fresh discovery of the reality of God. One might as well talk of the dynamic quality of a dynamo that is letting through no electric energies as to talk of a new dynamic for life when no energies from beyond our human forces have been discovered. The supreme founders of religions have always brought a new spring of energy to the world through their ability to reveal some aspect of the nature of God which had until then been hidden.

The peculiar aspect which receives emphasis through the life of a given race or people will quite naturally



be something intimately consonant with the special genius of that race or people. The prophets of Israel, with their burning passion for righteousness, brought more clearly into focus the *moral aspect* of the nature of God than had been done by any other revealers of the divine character. They reversed the easy, comfortable, popular idea that sacrifices and offerings would appease and satisfy God and make Him lenient toward the sin and wickedness of persons who duly performed the expected sacrifices. They refused to tolerate the view that religion is essentially a matter of form and etiquette and ritual. The God of the prophets is the guardian of the moral structure of the world. He does what is eternally *right*, and He calls for worshipers who have high respect for righteousness of heart and life in all their relations with Him and with men. If they do not preserve and maintain that attitude there is no safety, no security, for them anywhere in God's universe. They announce that laws of moral gravitation are as real and as inevitable as the laws of physical gravitation, and that doom forever dogs the violator of those unalterable moral principles which enforce and execute themselves.

That is the unique contribution of the great Hebrew prophets, and it may well be called the heart of the prophetic message of Israel to the world. It was never wholly lost. In fact, no essential truth of the eternal nature of things is likely to be lost. This inevitable

moral structure at the core and center of things is as well an inherent part of vital Christian faith. Christ was nurtured in the teachings of the great prophets of His race and their essential contribution came over undiluted into the religion which had its source in Him.

Dimly, but nevertheless surely, some of the great prophets saw that there was something in the nature of God which overtopped *justice* and which transcended the mighty principle of moral gravitation. Hosea and Jonah and the prophet of "the suffering servant" had swift glimpses and insights of a love and tenderness in God which is more like *grace* than like *justice*. The difficulty, however, was to reconcile what seemed like opposing qualities of life. How could moral gravitation be a fact, an inevitable fact, if, in the last resort, love was to break in and tilt the scale by a sudden burst of grace and favoritism? How can tenderness and forgiving grace operate in a world that is eternally moral? Christ's Gospel, His way of life, is the answer. There can be no *détour* which goes around the moral structure of the world. There can be no compromise with the eternal nature of things. What is inherently bad at one time and in one part of the universe cannot be fixed up and made to be good, or pronounced "good," at another time or in another part of the universe. There can be no caprice, or variableness in the ethical sphere. Changes in latitude and longitude do not alter the direction of the moral compass.

God, in Christ's teaching, remains the God of the moral plumb line as unmistakably as in the messages of Amos and Isaiah.

This is the ground of that stern note which is everywhere present in the Gospels. There is a winnowing fan operating which separates wheat from chaff. The process of division between those on the right hand and those on the left is as inevitable as is the law of survival of the fittest in nature. The foolish virgins, by their foolishness, shape their own destiny and it stays unalterable. The sorting of the fit and the unfit, the separation of grain and tares, can allow no one to form false hopes that the laws of the universe are to be taken lightly. Saying "Lord, Lord" with pious, unctuous lips will never alter the real conditions of the inner life itself. One *is*, and one remains, what his choices and his attitudes of will have made him. As always, character settles destiny. There is nothing in the original story which holds out any encouragement for soft and easy optimism. The universe is a *moral order* and every deed has moral consequences. The doom of Jerusalem is seen as clearly, and is pronounced as unequivocally, by this gentle, tender Christ as it would have been seen and pronounced by stern and relentless old Amos of Tekoa.

When we talk of "the heart of Christianity," then, we must include in it the reality of the moral order of the world. There is no slackening of the insistence on

righteousness. There is no dallying with moral consequences. Christianity began its mission as an ethical religion and it has remained ethical wherever its vitality has persisted. Elements of magic and traits of caprice have crept into Christianity at various stages of its history, but they do not belong to its substance. They are foreign importations. It carries in its central structure an overmastering respect for and confidence in the moral forces of the universe.

## v

*Law and Grace*

Somehow that rigid, moral structure which lies imbedded in Christianity must be harmonious with the unique message which Christ persistently proclaimed, the message that God is eternally tender, loving, forgiving, and full of grace. Both of these aspects are alike included in the heart of the original Christian message and way of life—the rugged moral note and the reality of grace as tender as a mother's love.

We have here a much deeper question than the reconciliation of grace with the old Mosaic law. The latter can well be thought of as a temporary and imperfect stage of life which was preparatory to the higher one. The lower is annulled and fades away when the higher comes in and supplants it. But grace does not and cannot annul the eternal moral nature of

things, nor is that reality ever supplanted or superseded. How *can* God be both the God of unswerving moral realities and at the same time a God of grace?

For Christ the answer to that seeming *impasse* is as natural and simple as life itself is. Love is not confronted with the problem at all. The problem exists only for those who come at the issues of life from the lower level of legality, of calculation and contrivance. If God had the status of a sovereign standing on His dignity and insisting upon His feudal rights, then of course He could not forgive or pardon or be genuinely loving until His stern sense of governmental dignity and honor were satisfied. To be soft and easy and yielding—to say, “I will not *count* this offense”—would endanger the whole structure of the legal, governmental system.

But it is exactly that entire legal conception which Christ wipes out and leaves behind. He leaps, by a supreme spiritual insight, to a wholly new revelation of the essential character of God and consequently of life itself. God is eternally *Father*. He does not *become* Father through some mysterious change in His nature, or on account of some transaction that has occurred, nor does He ever cease to have the character traits of Father. Creation is as much an expression of Father-love as redemption is. Love is the one method of soul-making. Soul-making cannot be done by force or by compulsion. It cannot be accomplished alone by

springs of fear or by the contrivances of discipline. The shift of approach from the legal level to that of grace is as momentous a change of level as is the shift from the stage of matter to that of life, or from the vegetable kingdom to that of the animal. Something that would have been unthinkable on the lower level emerges on the higher level and exhibits what now becomes a normal rôle of activity for that new level. It is as though one should pass from air-waves to radio-vibrations, or from molecular-processes to the inner processes of consciousness. In the world of matter ends are attained by the push and correlation of forces. In the realm of the Spirit progress and realization are achieved only by the suggestion and appeal of an end or goal that works by attraction. *The compulsion of a soul* is as much a contradiction of terms as the persuasion of a stone wall by argument would be.

Jesus was the interpreter of this way of life to a degree beyond that reached or expressed by anyone who has lived on earth. It must be said further that in the person of Christ we pass beyond what is usually meant by an *interpreter* of a way of life. His life has seemed to men in all generations to stand forth as a unique and attractive ideal of what life at its best and highest *should be*. St. Paul called Him "a new Adam," a new Creation, a new type of humanity. In saying that St. Paul was thinking of Him primarily as the beginning of a new order of life-giving spirit, that is to say, as a

typical incarnation of love and self-giving. He expected to see the miracle of transformation through love work on sin-crippled men and women in every walk of life. This appeal of love called out the potential Cephas hidden and hardly suspected in the impulsive Simon. It raised a sinning woman, whose hope and expectation were gone, to a pure and radiant saint. It changed a self-despised tax-collector into an honest and self-respecting man. It was instantly recognized by responsive little children. It had an almost miraculous effect on demoniacs who had been rendered more insane by methods of terror and compulsion. It seemed to fail in Pilate's Hall and at Golgotha. It did not soften the hate of crafty politicians or touch the quick of Roman soldiers. The jeer of the mob drowned out the gentle voice of forgiving love. To the onlookers the "defeat" appeared obvious. But somehow that Cross has touched the heart of the world as nothing else has ever done and it has through the ages been the most redemptive power of which history has any record. That mystery of an overwhelming "defeat" turned to victory and an unmitigated "disaster" changed into triumph must be considered more fully later, since it lies close to the very heart of Christianity itself.

The point to which we must now return is a consideration of the divine significance of this incarnation of love and tenderness in Christ and its bearing upon

the nature of God. From the very first stages of His mission Christ identified this way of grace and self-giving to which He was dedicated with the eternal character of God. His test of any quality of life was always to see whether it made the possessor of it more like God: "You are to love, even your enemies, so that you may be like God; you are to be *peacemakers* so that you may be recognized as God's children; you are to be perfect in your aspirations for goodness so that you may be like your Father in heaven; you are to be forgiving in spirit so that you can receive and appreciate God's forgiveness toward you." In other words, spiritual traits expressed here on earth through human life take on extraordinary significance and have a signal glory since they reveal in however humble a way the stupendous reality of what God is like. The sin against the holy Spirit consists in having a state of mind, a hardness of heart, that is unable to recognize love when it is manifested. It is a state of mind wholly unlike God. It is the loss of capacity to discriminate between spiritual light and darkness, between goodness and evil, between love and hate, and the inevitable doom that goes with it is that such a soul *cannot be forgiven*, because it cannot recognize love and forgiveness when they are bestowed upon it. To lose love is by an unescapable law of life to lose God.



## VI

*Identity of God and Love*

The parables which interpret the heart of God with utmost naturalness and simplicity take for granted that love is the essential aspect of His character. Lilies in the field and mother birds brooding on their nests are symbols for Him of a divine care existing at the heart of things. The thoughtful gift of a cup of cold water to a little child in need stores up an increment of love in the spiritual world which is never lost nor wasted. The spirit of mercy is cumulative and adds to the total stock of mercy—mercy “obtains” mercy and grace begets grace.

Three unforgettable parables, which we owe to St. Luke, carry this identity of love with God to its highest possible expression in words. The shepherd seeking his lost sheep, the woman hunting for her lost coin, the father meeting his returning son who had gone wrong—utterly simple stories and yet immortal frescoes of reality—carry the mind of the reader unconsciously and irresistibly from incidents of village life in Palestine to an eternal quality in the heart of God. You find yourself absorbed in the peasant narrative and before you know it you are in the unseen realm and are contemplating the amazing grace of God. You pass without a break or a divide from a father out on a Galilean hillside meeting his ragged son returning stripped of

his inheritance and with his chance for a life of goodness almost as completely squandered and suddenly you discover that you are hearing about the divine Father. "His father saw him a long way off, was filled with compassion and ran to meet him and fell on his neck and kissed him." And then you hear him say: "Bring forth the best robe and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand and shoes on his feet and kill the fatted calf and let us eat and be happy, for this my son was dead and is alive again, he was lost and is found."

One would expect that endless repetition of the story would have made it trite and commonplace, but somehow the opposite has happened. It grows all the time more awe-inspiring and wonderful. It inherently possesses the power of stirring in the reader that unique quality which has been well called the "numinous" state of mind—the feeling of divine Presence. We finish the story with a hushed sense that *God is like that*.

The effect of the account of the crucifixion is to carry this "numinous" feeling to a still greater height. It is well-nigh impossible as one reads to separate earth and heaven in the unfolding stages of this event. The sufferer is all the time identified with more than Himself. The cry of "Abba" in the garden, with the words "not my will but thine," is a loving commitment to the redemptive way of love, which is here discovered to be as deep as the heart of God Himself. One of the

Italian Franciscan painters has pictured the crucifixion scene with the nails driven through Christ's hands and through the beams of the cross into the hands of the Father behind the cross. It is crude and pictorial, as symbols must be, but one comes away from the event of the cross with the feeling that the suffering love, the grace and self-giving made vivid and vocal in that event through this gentle Figure on the cross do express as nothing else does the heart of God. The identity of this love, that goes the whole way and stops at nothing, with the deepest nature of God seems as natural as life itself. The two greatest interpreters of it that have yet lived, St. Paul and St. John, do not hesitate to make the identity complete and for them this grace and sacrificial love which suffers to the end and does not let go, is the world's supreme revelation of the life and character of God.

The modern man feels a hesitation about building speculative theories or elaborate theological systems around such sacred events as that. He feels something here which moves the deepest levels of his being and which searches him through and through, but he wants to have it act upon him as the greatest things in nature do by their own inherent power. It seems to him a pity to stereotype it and turn it into a formula for cold, argumentative purposes. He prefers in a hushed and reverent way to contemplate the stupendous reality and to face the issues of life and the tragedy of sin in the

light of it. But in matters of such moment there will be, and there should be, a variety of attitudes. For nineteen hundred years the best minds of the world have labored to interpret the meaning and significance of that self-giving Love, symbolized by the cross. The interpretations have always taken on the temporal color of the age in which the interpreter lived. That is precisely as we should expect it would be. Men are moved by insights which are congruent with the thoughts and realities by which they shape their lives. The fact, however, which stands out most clearly is the never-ceasing transforming power of that central event itself. It outlives all the passing, changing interpretations of it. Its dynamic quality is as great at this moment as ever it was. It moves modern hearts as powerfully as it did ancient or medieval ones, though one must reach beyond the *phrase* to the reality it stands for, before the heart is stirred to-day. The only danger that could ever threaten to weaken that central event of Christ's life would be the disintegration of the significance of love itself as an eternal reality.

It has always seemed to the profoundest interpreters of Christianity that one of its most central ideas at the heart of this unique religion is the discovery that in Christ God has revealed Himself through humanity, that here at a point in history eternity has been manifested within the temporal sphere. How it came to be, how it could be, the metaphysics of the event, the actual

relation involved between the natural and the supernatural, have always been in debate—quite frequently, fruitless debate. If we stopped to analyze as curiously and as insistently how mind and will and spiritual insight and unselfish love and the domination of ideals emerge in any child born into the world by physical process, we should at once have a nest of insoluble problems on our hands. Instead of losing ourselves in the bottomless bog of speculation, we accept the facts of life and let the two worlds of matter and spirit reveal their possibilities through this mysterious reality, a self-conscious personality superposed on a physical base. Until we have solved this nearer problem which is with us every day we can perhaps allow that far one to rest in its fringe of mystery and thankfully accept the historical facts which seem evident and convincing.

## VII

*Only a Person Could Reveal the Heart of God*

There is only one way that a God of supreme significance for our lives could reveal His character to beings like us. The universe in the structure of its ordered framework is no doubt some kind of a revelation. The harmony, symmetry and beauty which break in on us through the things around us take us closer to the nature of the World within the world we see. But power, order, beauty are not enough to satisfy beings of our

type. What we have been calling "the Heart of things" is still lacking. It could not come to light except where love and sympathy and gentleness and traits of endurance and self-giving find expression. There cannot be such a manifestation until there is an adequate personal organ of revelation. The most sensitive interpreters of such values of life find in Christ a revelation like that. They feel satisfied that in this Person of Galilee and Judea we see what the Heart of God is like.

It will always be possible, no doubt, for objectors to say that there is no way to pass over from the subjective experiences which Christ felt and from the deeds He did and the things He suffered to the objective reality of God. No, nor is it possible to convince a thorough-going subjectivist of the validity of any kind of objectivity, even the objectivity of the external world which science describes or which the lover of beauty interprets. It ought, however, to satisfy most earnest and sincere minds that here in Christ the universe has produced a Person who made the supremacy of love vivid and vocal and victorious, a Person whom multitudes of men and women have felt to be good enough and noble enough to express the highest human ideal of God's nature. And the fact remains that Christ carries at least this indubitable testimony to objectivity that there must be something like Him at the heart of the eternal nature of things since the eternal nature of things has produced Him here in our world.

The fact that God can be revealed in a personal life carries momentous implications. It means that the divine and the human are not so far sundered as had been persistently supposed. It means that human nature *can* become an organ for the Life of God since it *has been* such an organ. It means that God is nearer to us than we supposed; more truly an Emmanuel God than we had been wont to believe. It may well be that God is all along endeavoring to break through and reveal His presence and character, the only difficulty being that He finds such poor, self-filled instruments for any true revelation to break through.

Christianity has, beyond question, borne a testimony across the centuries that God and man belong together and that both suffer loss when they are sundered. A solitary God, living apart in Himself, with no inter-relationships, with no intercourse of love, would at best be much less than we mean by "God." So, too, the self-seeking man, absorbed alone in his own survival and acquisitions, achieving a life of only one dimension, without height or depth, without wonder or mystery, would be that ancient monstrosity known as "mere man." There can be no *life* worthy the name, no love, no joy, no radiance, until God and man find each other. This is the meaning of the "double search" which underlies all human history. And here in Christ the Above and the below unite. The double search culminates in the peace and joy of mutual and reciprocal finding. Instead of being perplexed over the metaphysi-

cal difficulties we ought to leap to the discovery that the Higher and the lower that *ought* to be together in harmonious union, at least for once *are* together and both the divine and the human alike stand revealed in a single Person, in one harmonious life.

## VIII

*The Kingdom of God*

This revealing union of the divine and the human in a life of love and service and self-giving is the clue to another central idea which belongs in the heart of Christianity, namely, the way of life which Christ called "the Kingdom of God." This phrase has had many meanings during the period of Christian history, and, as it stands expressed in the Gospels, it is open to more than a single interpretation. The first century, in which the New Testament came to birth, was an age of apocalyptic expectations and the despair of getting spiritual results by natural processes, which characterizes all apocalypses, is undoubtedly in evidence throughout the New Testament, as is also the fervid hope that a supernatural relief expedition was near at hand. That despair of what earth can do and that glowing expectation of what heaven can do, and will do, color all our accounts and make it easy and natural for the modern interpreter to find a large apocalyptic strand in the primitive narratives.

But the remarkable fact is that there is another far



deeper and more unique strand there of a wholly different type. It is easy to see how the apocalyptic hope got its place in the story; it is not so easy to account for the amazing depth and originality of the central insight which constitutes here the heart of the message, which is the expectation of a new humanity engendered by the process of the coming of the Life of God into the lives of men. St. Paul, with his extraordinary genius for seeing those aspects in the original message which would appeal to the minds of the Græco-Roman world, called Christ "a new Adam," the beginning of a new order of humanity, and that note characterizes what may well be called "the Ægean Gospel" set forth in St. Paul's Epistles. It is almost certainly a true and genuine interpretation of the original Gospel message. God revealed in and through humanity *is* the heart of the Gospel.

The great saying: "The Kingdom of God is in you," has been called by a modern Hindu the greatest revelation that any person has ever made. But it is not a solitary saying, apart and alone, and out of keeping with the rest of the sayings. It is rather a key which opens the whole meaning of the unique conception of the Kingdom which forms the deepest and most original strand of the message of "good news," which we call "Gospel." The model prayer asks that God's Kingdom may come, and it forthwith interprets the words with the clause, "Thy will be done on earth as it is done in

heaven." That would appear to be the nature of the Kingdom in its realized fullness, namely the complete sway of the Life of God in and over the lives of men—His will done here as it is done there.

A noted writer, William P. Du Bose, in a deservedly famous book not yet out of date, *The Gospel in the Gospels*, defined the Kingdom of God as "that permanent and eternal incarnation of God in humanity which we see not only realized in the individual person of Jesus Christ, but to be consummated in the universal humanity of which He is the head." Dr. Du Bose rightly maintains that the Kingdom of God is "simply and literally God Himself in humanity," and he adds that this was "the essence of Christ's religion." What this noble teacher called the essence of Christ's religion is here being called the heart of Christianity.

The world has suffered serious loss by the constant assumption that the Kingdom of God is a *post mortem* state instead of being a positive Christian ideal of life for the individual and for society here in this world where it is so desperately needed. The other-worldly emphasis in Christian teaching has accustomed us to postpone our holy cities and our rivers of the water of life to a realm beyond the grave and we have consequently lowered the tone of our hope and expectation for this poor heritage we call earth. We have leveled down when we should have leveled up. We have taken the Kingdom of God as a final "gift" when we should

have thought of it as a present "task"—the citizenship of the new humanity according to the measure of "the new Adam," its founder.

One reason for the postponement to another sphere has been the loss of that creative faith which Christ had in such high degree, that God is an Emmanuel God, here with us, the Life of our lives, the Ground of our hope and expectation. Heaven has been enhanced by the depreciation of earth. The Yonder has been glorified by the despair of the here and now. If God is "over there" and not "down here," we can only wait and hope and postpone. But if on the other hand *this* is God's world and He is with us in our supreme spiritual adventures, as Christ saw was the case, then the Kingdom becomes the coöperative task of God and ourselves throughout the ages.

Whatever else the Kingdom of God may be in its full meaning it is in its very nature a way of life which must begin first of all within the life of a person. Whatever more it may be, it is at least a kind of society in which that spirit of love and peace that ruled and controlled Christ's life has become the inward law and nature of those who compose it. "The Kingdom of God," as St. Paul saw, "is not meat and drink (that is, it is not a ceremonial performance) but love and peace and joy in the holy Spirit," which is the Life of God, in the lives of men.

The Beatitudes give the most perfect illustration of

its inmost spirit. Consciousness of the unattained; hunger and thirst for an infinite goodness; quietness and gentleness of spirit; the discovery of the depth of life through suffering; the tenderness of grace; purity of heart which prepares for beatific vision; making love and peace prevail in the midst of the difficulties and noises of the world, and readiness to suffer for truth and love—these are the traits that make the Kingdom, and as their area widens will bring it into operation here among men. But there is no blinking of the fact in the Gospels that it is an adventure, and that too a *costly* adventure. It may cost all that a person has and even the person's life besides. It means going out into a world organized on a basis of self-seeking and calculation, and "conquering" it and transforming it into another kind of world by a confident method of love and grace. In a recurrent phrase the Book of Revelation expresses the idea of this conquering method with the words: "The Lamb made war against the beast and overcame it."

Christ once, in a striking passage, called the method "going the second mile." He saw how much of life and religion was "legal," how many things were done because they were expected or required or compelled and when they were performed they were counted up and cashed in for merit. To Him this first mile of compulsion, this carefully measured mile, had almost no significance for real life as it ought to be. For Him life

really began when one cut loose from convention and rule and system and started living toward some great goal of life for the sheer joy and thrill of it, no longer painfully counting milestones. When this second-mile spirit is born one is ready to cut off a right hand, or pluck out an eye, for the adventure, for the goal, without stopping to think of the loss. Even a Roman cross standing straight athwart the road would not turn the adventurer from His aim.

There are a number of impressive parables which vividly convey this spirit of the second mile, none certainly more impressive than that of the good Samaritan who unexpectedly does what the calculating Priest and Levite neglect to do. "The Parable of the great surprise," as it has been called, shows the naïve surprise and wonder of those who find themselves on the right hand in the Judgment and who had been so absorbed in their deeds of simple kindness and love that they had never counted them up or cashed them in for merit—"When saw we thee hungry?" The world is so accustomed to the methods of secular calculation and rationalization that this "other way" seems absurd and forbidding. It has never been tried on a large scale or in a bold, determined fashion. God's poor little man of Assisi went all the way through with it as his method and the world reverently preserves the scenes of his life as its most sacred shrines, but it is one thing to canonize a thirteenth-century saint and another thing to take up,

adapt and carry on his adventure in the twentieth century. John Woolman was a humble second-mile saint in the eighteenth century and once more he demonstrated the conquering power of love and grace—the lamb against the beast—but there is still much more territory to win. There can be little question that this spiritual adventure with the quiet force of love and co-operative good will lies at the very heart of the Gospel of Christ and is the main business of Christ's men in the world.

There appears to be no way to separate ethics and religion. When they are cut apart the reality of each half comes to an end, as surely as would have been the case with the child which King Solomon proposed to divide. A religion which has only to do with a world beyond and above this world fades into an abstraction. An ethical way of life on the other hand which has no eternal significance, which does not rise above the finite and temporal, is like a Damascus river that ends in the sand and loses itself without finding itself. Finite goals are always inadequate for moral aims. One cannot draw a finite line around life and limit it to an empirical sphere without cutting its nerve of action and spoiling its adventure before it starts. All significant moral purposes reach beyond the skyline and presuppose a more yet that has no earthly terminus. The dynamic energy for the supreme adventures of the race comes into life from beyond it. There is a halo of mystery

around all of man's greatest undertakings. The highest creations of genius give the impression that God and man have worked together to produce it. It is not an accident that the civilization which is to bring at last a harmonized man and a harmonized society, each in coöperative accord, should be called "the Kingdom of God," since, when it comes and in so far as it comes, it will be the creative work of God and man together, God revealed in and through humanity, man finding himself in and through the Life of God.

This message of life, this call to the task of building, as co-laborers with God, the harmonized society which is to reveal the will of God on earth ought to thrill men with an enthusiasm like that, though far greater than that, which has swept the heartstrings of the Russian youth. The dynamic is at least as real as the dynamic behind our immense electric power plants and the liberating force of this way of life when it *finds* a man is the greatest that has ever broken into human history.

CHAPTER V

THE NATURE AND THE MISSION OF THE  
CHURCH

I

*Hindrances within the Church*

IN an earlier section we have considered the obstacles and hindrances which confront Christianity to-day and which prevent, or at least slow down, its triumphant progress. Secularism, naturalism, materialism, and, in some parts of the world, communism, stand out in intrenched hostility to the Christian way of life and to the Christian body of ideas and ideals. In one form or another, by silence or by settled opposition, they all deny the reality of God and they leave human life stripped almost bare of spiritual significance and transcendent meaning.

But there is another obstacle to be found within the Christian movement itself, which perhaps presents a graver difficulty to the spread of Christianity than any one of those militant foes on the outside. No one of these temporary formulations of thought, which for the moment seem to be a menace to the spread of Chris-



tianity, would present any serious obstacle if the forces of organized Christianity were united in heart and purpose and if the Church of Christ were in truth and in reality a living organ of His Spirit. The divisions in the Church itself and its failure to confront its tasks with vision and leadership and creative power constitute, if the truth were frankly uttered, the supreme difficulty which confronts the Christian interpretation of life in the world to-day. Organization in a subtle, more or less unconscious way tends to become an end in itself and may even defeat the very ideals and aims it exists to promote and foster. The power and authority of a great system, made august and sacred by time and perspective, fit rather badly with the spiritual demands of personal freedom, initiative and fresh creative leadership. Ecclesiasticism does not easily keep house on friendly terms with a growing faith of first-hand experience and inward vision. The natural conservatism of a great historic religious body is bound to produce a dampening effect on glowing and original minds, and it makes it difficult for the prophets of a new age, when they appear, to find scope for their transforming work. The importance of the preservation of the inheritance from the past cultivates an attitude of caution and inclines an ancient organization to defend the *status quo*, to stand sponsor for outgrown customs, and to protect forms of worship and systems of thought which have become inadequate for the expanding life

of the race. We are only too familiar with the tendency to compromise, the lack of social vision, the failure to see, as from a mountain-top, the dawn of new epochs and to give prophetic leadership in times of moral crisis.

For these and other reasons the organized Church often seems to social and economic reformers a main obstacle to human progress. That attitude to-day is widespread and it is well-nigh irreconcilable. It is a primary item in the Soviet creed and it dominates the modern culture of most countries in Europe and Latin America. In the United States and Canada the lines are not quite so sharply drawn. The hostility to the Church, except in the ranks of organized labor, is moderate and tempered. It is an attitude of neglect rather than positive opposition. A great many of the educated youth of these countries have lost faith in the Church as an instrument of progress and have gradually, often reluctantly, turned away from it because it does not minister to their highest needs and because it seems to them so hesitant in its championship of the ideals of life with which they are kindled and possessed. They find it difficult to understand how a Church founded by Christ can show such feeble loyalty to the principles of truth, the way of life and the spirit of love to which His life was dedicated. Their very loyalty to the Christ of the Gospels often makes it difficult for them to be enthusiastically loyal to the Church

which bears His name. The inability of the Church to meet the intellectual issues of modern times and to rise to a convincing spiritual interpretation of the world which laboratory science has been discovering has left many minds stranded in doubt and many more persons suspicious and lethargic toward it. Its pronouncements often seem to them helpless and futile. It spends time on issues and problems that are remote from the ones that are central in the minds of the youth of to-day.

They come from their books and class rooms and laboratories, and are asked to listen to matters which have no vital interest for them. They look up and are not fed. It is not altogether the fault of the Church. There is a certain element of perversity and caprice of attitude to which no amount of wisdom and insight would probably bring health and healing. But in the main the present generation of youth are sound in their fundamental aims and keen for reality and truth. They are ready for great adventure when they are summoned to it and they would go the whole costly way with a Church genuinely pledged to Christ's program. Whenever the Church has taken a position of creative leadership and has summoned its youth to some great spiritual adventure significant enough to draw forth the potential capacities of its youthful members, they have always responded with zeal and alacrity, as they would do once more if the call reached them with kindling power.

II

*The Divided Forces*

Among its weaknesses and grounds of failure for its present task stands the central weakness of the divided forces and cross-purposes of the Christian Church. It is a serious confusion to thoughtful minds to have so many "kinds" and "varieties" of Christianity bidding for loyalty. This obstacle is probably a good deal more in evidence in rural districts and in village communities than it is in the cosmopolitan life of great cities. A number of small, weak churches, often manifesting a rival animus to each other divide the spiritual forces of the communities and the division makes it impossible for any one of them to be properly equipped or adequately financed for the execution of its mission in the world. Sectarian fervor tends often to emphasize and keep alive peculiar and sometimes obsolete aspects of ecclesiastical order or types of thought which had better fade away and give place to new and more vital features adapted to the spiritual needs of the time. The sectarian divisions which are such a source of weakness and confusion here at home play still greater havoc in missionary lands. Those who are asked to leave the ancient religion of their fathers for Christianity are both amazed and confused to find how many "kinds" of Christianity there are. In some instances the adherents of one "kind" will have nothing to do with the adherents of another "kind." They

reciprocally give the impression that each other "kind" of Christianity is of a lower order than their own, and, consequently, that love, which is the most essential aspect of Christ's Christianity, and which should certainly be the most characteristic feature of a Christianity that goes out to penetrate the life and thought of another country, is missing. There will never be a world-conquering Christian faith until there is, at least in spirit, a united Church.

One of the gravest obstacles to unity has been, and in some regions still continues to be, the infallible state of mind on the part of those who present their interpretations of Christian thought. In the first place, such persons fail to recognize that Christianity is founded on love and grace rather than on theories and speculations. And in the second place, they mistakenly set up cocksureness, the fiery positive, as a criterion of truth. "I beseech you by the bowels of Christ to consider that you may possibly be mistaken," was the way Oliver Cromwell on a famous occasion addressed the infallible Scotch Elders. It may always conceivably be a fact that the most infallible-minded asserter of ultimates is wrong. Infallible-mindedness is sometimes only another name for excessive egoism, and sometimes, again, it is a subtle psychological "compensation" for deeplying doubts and fears. One shouts louder or whistles more vigorously in the presence of dark and danger. The person who is most secure and confident of his

faith and truth is humble and modest. He does not strive nor cry. He does not lift up his voice in the street. He is respectful of the truth which others hold. And in any case, he holds his truth in love and reverence. He draws and attracts others into truth, and he suspects the reality of that so-called "truth" which divides and severs. The beatitude on meekness has been well called one of the most "incredible" of all the beatitudes, and so it is. Meekness is just that attitude of quiet confidence in eternal principles of truth which enables one to be calm and unmoved and free from turmoil and bluster "though the nations rage and imagine a vain thing."

### III

#### *A Visible or an Invisible Church?*

And yet, on the other hand, there are dangers of another sort involved in the formation of one single imperial organization inclusive enough to hold the entire Christian family of the world in one organic body. There has been a curious and yet widespread tendency manifested to confuse unity with uniformity. They are totally different. The former is of the highest importance; in fact, it is an essential feature of a Church that is to be *effectual*. Uniformity on the other hand is disastrous, even deadly. It levels down instead of up. It cramps and compels the mind. It is mechanistic

and not spiritual. It is even conceivable that a tightly organized and uniform Church, which allowed no freedom of deviation, might present more dangers and difficulties to the spread of Christ's Christianity than are to be found in the divided Church of the present.

A few years ago, some one, in friendly conversation with one of the leading American officials of the Roman Catholic Church, asked him what he would say if he saw a person who obviously possessed and manifested grace in his life and yet never made use of what his Church called "the means of grace," or "the channels of grace"? Without a moment's hesitation the distinguished Churchman replied: "I should say that he belonged to the invisible Church and I should say further that it is more important to belong to the invisible Church than to the visible one."

No one could question the breadth or the liberality of that answer. It is exactly the position that was taken in the sixteenth century by a number of profound spiritual prophets who regretted to see the Reformers of that epoch laboring to set up another infallible visible Church to take the place of the one against which they were "protesting." These spiritual prophets were afraid of organizations and forms and systems. They hoped to have the spirit of love and truth and gentleness propagated through personal lives and they believed that the Light and Life of Christ as Eternal Spirit could be forever born anew in the hearts

of saints without the necessity for any visible body anywhere in the world to be the incarnation of it.

This is a very popular and a taking theory in the world to-day. It avoids the dangers of a great organization. It entails no burdens. It imposes no statement of creed. It loads no inherited cargo of ideas upon the tender backs of an unborn generation. It trusts to the contagious power of truth and love. The ideal is, no doubt, a beautiful one which has attracted and fascinated many noble souls at many different periods of human history. But it is almost certainly a dream rather than a solid reality. There might, no doubt, be a world in which truth and love are transmitted and propagated by invisible contagions without any visible organ of preservation and transmission, but it seems pretty certain that we are not living in that kind of a world. The "spiritual," as we know it, is never disembodied, existing apart by itself in isolation and floating intangibly above the realm which we inhabit. The spiritual is conjunct with the physical. The one is superposed on the other. However unlike they may be, they belong together and both suffer by division into sundered halves.

In spite of the dangers, therefore, which beset organizations, institutions and systems, and in spite of their tendency to smother the truth they carry, there appears to be no solution of the problem of the transmission of the Life and Love and Truth of God re-



vealed in Christ without the existence of a visible corporate body in the world as the organ of its apprehension and transmission. The most urgent problem before us to-day, if we are eager to carry spiritual vision and power into the life of our present-day world, is the task of drawing the branches of the Christian Church together into one living whole, sufficiently unified to be an organ of the Spirit, and possessed of wisdom and power enough to attract into its wide family life the multitude of spiritually minded persons who at present have no religious home and no group fellowship.

## IV

*Organism Rather than Organization*

The best type of organization for the preservation and transmission of the precious spiritual treasure which constitutes the heart of Christianity would seem to be one that approached as closely as possible to a living, growing *organism*, and that was as far removed as possible from a *mechanism*, though organizations tend by their law of habit and custom to slide in the mechanistic direction. St. Paul is one of the greatest interpreters of the organic type of Church that ever lived. Again and again he used the human body with its vital functions as his best illustration of the unique organism that was to be Christ's new Body in the

world. "You are the Body of Christ," he solemnly reminds his Corinthian believers, "and each one of you is a particular member of it."<sup>1</sup> And he proceeds to explain how this living Body which was to be the reincarnation of Christ was to be led, guided, directed and taught by persons endowed with spiritual "gifts" rather than by technical officials.<sup>2</sup> That there might be no doubt in any one's mind what was in his thought the highest gift and qualification for spiritual leadership he gave the immortal description of the gift in the Hymn of Love in the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians. The spirit of love which suffers long and is kind towers over all other qualifications and far surpasses that knowledge of speculation which puffs up the possessor with pride and sets one group of speculators against another group with a different set of speculative ideas and ends, sooner or later, in division if not in hate and hostility. Love, for St. Paul, is the heart of the organic type of Church.

In a flash of insight, while he was living in Ephesus, where he daily saw the famous Temple of Diana, he leaped to the novel idea that a person could be a temple. "Know you not that you are temples?" he wrote to the members of the Corinthian Church. Gradually the idea ripened and expanded, and when he wrote his Epistle to the Ephesians, he had come to think of the whole Christian Body as a living

<sup>1</sup> I Cor. XII. 27.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 28-34.

Temple composed of individual personal temples—"each several building (i.e., temple) fitly framed together groweth into a holy Temple in the Lord for a habitation of God in the Spirit." It is difficult for us to pass in imagination from a temple as a structure of stone occupying space somewhere in a city to a human person who has become a revealing place for God and then to many such persons fused together through love and service to form one mighty corporate Temple which is God's new habitation. Just that is St. Paul's bold conception—the new Body composed of persons is to be the dwelling place and the revealing place of the Spirit, the organ of Christ's Life in the world.

But ideals, however lofty, are bound to be tempered and transformed by the stern requirements of the human environment through which they get expressed, and the more lofty the ideals are the more certain are they to be brought down to the temporal conditions of human life on earth. The student of Christianity in the early centuries of its history sees as in a mighty laboratory the operation of the processes which wove together as into a seamless robe the strands from the Jewish inheritance, the strands from the immense Hellenistic contribution, and the strands supplied by the organizing genius of Rome. The imperial historic Church is thus the most awe-inspiring creation of the combined genius of the greatest races the world has seen. No man reared it and no human mind built it. It is the

corporate work of many centuries, of many minds, and of many races. It is august and it rightly moves men's minds with powerful emotions.

But with all its greatness and uniqueness the Church which emerged fell far short of St. Paul's ideal, and it has throughout its historical stages revealed characteristic and structural weaknesses as an organ of the spirit of Christ. It has become entangled in political aims and ambitions and policies. Secondary considerations have crowded out primary ones. Processes of adjustment to external situations have involved compromise and lowered ideals. Concern for preservation and promotion of the organization itself has carried along more or less irresistibly the surrender of the spiritual treasure for which the organization existed. Temporal expediency has run its course without due regard to the business of transmitting eternal realities. It has proved extremely difficult to maintain an organization with august authority without smothering out the fresh insight of individual souls, the free and spontaneous vision of truth, and the prophetic spirit which are essential to the life and growth and progress of a Church of the Spirit. A heavy hand has fallen with crushing weight upon the tender germs of new life. Conformity has been counted more important than growth and transformation. The tragedies of suppression, the machinery of control and power, the ingenuities of casuistry and political maneuver have left a

dark trail across the centuries. The spectacle of truth on the rack and of new-born faiths on the scaffold has shocked all who have sympathetically explored the history of the Church in its periods of power.

## v

*An Organic Body*

That beautiful dream of the Body of Christ composed of many individual members, and that vision of a habitation of God in a living corporate Temple composed of many temples seem remote and far away. It is no wonder that the spiritual prophets of the sixteenth century, supposing as they did that the Reformation meant the break-up and terminus of the historic Church, should have proposed the creation of an invisible Church to take the place of the visible one, whose days, they assumed, were over. The Reformers, however, especially the main-line Reformers, Luther, Zwingli and Calvin, had little thought of passing over from a visible Church to an invisible one. They were as hostile to "the spiritual reformers" with their dreams and visions as they were to the Church of Rome with its imperial organization. They set to work, each in his own way, with rare creative, architectural skill to rebuild the visible Church. They turned to the New Testament for their model plan, for their pattern in the mount, but each builder came back to his task with a

different model plan. The contemporary Anabaptists had still another one, uniquely different. They all found it difficult to reconcile the accounts of the Church in Acts with the picture presented in the Pastoral Epistles ascribed to St. Paul. In the one elders, that is presbyters, held the preëminence and in the other, bishops, that is, episcopally ordained leaders, were the pillars of the structure, while the Anabaptist scholars could find in the New Testament authority only for a democratic Church, governed and managed by the total membership. It was disturbing to have so many models, and peculiarly disturbing to peace and harmony when each one of the builders insisted that his model was definitely given and infallibly the only right one. The second and third generation after the birth of the Reformation far surpassed the first generation in this air of infallibility. It grew to be almost a mental disease. And with the increase of infallible certainty came a corresponding tendency to division and to the formation of new sects.

It is strange that these infallible readers of the New Testament who had such miraculously keen eyes for Church models should have failed to have noticed St. Paul's exaltation of love over speculative knowledge and his cautions against the pride of infallibility and that they should have missed his emphasis on the Church as an organic body, a Temple of temples, growing and expanding with the life of the Spirit. They

found, as has happened in all ages, what they were looking for, and they had no eyes for what did not fit their own mental climate.

Unfortunately the glorification of speculative theory and the fiery positive attitude of infallibility had a very long run in Protestant circles. The nineteenth century was marked beyond any other century, except possibly the seventeenth, by the tendency to form new sects through a process of the division of existing Churches. The large Protestant denominations split into fragmentary parts and the parts again divided into minuter parts. The small denominations caught the contagious habit and wrecked in many cases their very existence by the peril of separations. Each separation produced an atmosphere of theological hate and bitterness, and as fast as the spirit of infallibility spread the spirit of love and grace—the true and essential marks of Christianity—waned away and died.

That dark eclipse has passed, one hopes forever, and a new era of comprehending love has dawned. There are far too many denominations in existence in this new era, and some of them at least have very little significant ground for separate continuance. Time will no doubt remedy that defect. There is a principle of survival of the fittest which operates in the social and spiritual sphere as certainly as it does in the biological. Ideas and ideals are severely tested by the processes of history and they are sifted and sorted in the mighty winnowings of the ages. It is so, too, with religious

sects. They meet great days of judgment. No archangel's trumpet is blown. No visible assizes are set up in the sky. But the day of judgment moves on none the less in its siftings, and lo, the sect that has no significant mission for humanity disappears. Its crown is removed and its name is forgotten. The process is a long, slow one, but it is irresistible, far more so than inquisitions and heresy tribunals. It can be taken for granted that all useless and petty sects with their infallible certainties about airy nothings will be weeded out by laws which execute themselves, if men can be patient to let these laws work.

The profounder and more significant denominations that will survive the sortings of time and history will in most cases be needed as purveyors and transmitters of some special aspect of Christian truth and life. The fullness of life and truth, as Christ has revealed it, is too vast and varied to be compressed to a single point of view. There is, and one may assume there always will be, need of variety of expression and presentation. The entire Family of God will need many diverse households of faith, the complete Body of Christ will need many differentiated members, each with some unique function.

## VI

### *Many Types Needed*

There will almost certainly always be many persons in the world who feel the need of a Church which



possesses august authority. For persons of that type the Church *is* a Church precisely because it is something more than a collection and aggregation of religiously minded persons. It is something more than an empirical congregation of truth-seekers. Its authority to their minds is due, not merely to its antiquity and its immense service to humanity through the power of its message and ministry, nor alone to its array of saints and martyrs. They think of it, and feel bound to think of it, as a supernatural institution, divinely inaugurated at a specific moment in history, miraculously endowed from above with efficacious sacraments and with a God-given ordination for effective ministry. Its power and authority are dependent not on a haphazard succession of able leaders whose wisdom and intelligence steer it through the crises of history; the authority and power are rather derived from an apostolic succession invisibly transmitted by a special gift of God from Christ and His apostles to the successive recipient of a like enduement. The Church is thus thought of as an immortal Communion, composed both of living and dead, and speaking with authority to each age as out of eternity. Membership in it confers some peculiar grace, and participation in its sacraments brings not only joy and comfort, but mysterious saving effects as well. This faith and attitude is found not only in the historic Roman Catholic Church. The so-called "High Church" conception is a widespread

state of mind confined to no one communion, and it is not likely to disappear from the world. Men and women in the midst of the mysteries of life and death, with the pitiful limitations of knowledge and the tremendous importance of saving help and healing, long for God-given certainties and for a voice of authority that reaches beyond the fringes of space and time. Unless the human mind discovers some way of penetrating through the hidden secrets and mysteries of life and the beyond by a method of knowledge now wholly unpredictable, there will continue to be persons who lean heavily on the comforting pronouncements and the awe-inspiring ministries of an authoritative Church.

But just as certainly there are and always will be persons who feel assured in their own soul's experience that there is a divine light planted in man's inmost being which makes it possible for persons like us to have direct intimate communion and fellowship with God here and now. Those who live and work in the joy of that faith and experience look for and desire no other kind of authority than the authority of inner light and the demonstration of life and love and truth. They do not feel like aliens and foreigners here in the world of time, who need special ambassadors commissioned to speak for a distant Sovereign. Their hearts burn with the consciousness of a living Presence here and now. They live their lives and do their work with a sense of unsundered correspondence with their

Great Companion. For them a Church is a Fellowship of those who believe in, live by, and share in this presence of God. It is a "blessed community" of persons joined together in the life of the Spirit for the service of Christ and His Kingdom. Life and organism, union in the spirit of love, are for such persons more important and more essential than are great organizations and imperial institutions.

Persons who share that outlook for the most part welcome fresh light and the advance of knowledge. They expect more truth to break forth under the guidance of the Spirit of Truth. They welcome, too, the social and ethical tests of group-experience by which what is capricious and erratic can be weeded out and the precious gold be recognized and preserved.

This mystical position, which in substance is the Quaker position, is far more widespread than the membership of the Society of Friends. That Society has gathered up and transmitted a mystical attitude as old and as continuous as the Christian Church. The Society of Friends has never been a wholly adequate organ of these ideas and ideals, and at its best it has had in its membership only a fraction of the persons who are of that type of mind. The Society of Friends as a separate body may decrease, and may even cease to exist as a bearer of these ideals. But even so they will find a new incarnation as they have done many times in the past, and there will continue to be what

may be called a Church of the Spirit—a body of persons who are satisfied with a very simple organic form of organization and who find their spiritual life inwardly fed by the bread and water of life.

These two types of Church are strikingly unlike, but neither type alone would ever satisfy all those who are religiously minded and who want to belong to the Household of God. Neither one has any right or claim to set itself up as God's only channel of love and grace or as the only way that men can find their spiritual needs met. The varieties of human need are great and the aspects of divine truth are so multiform that the Great Church of which Christ is the Head must include these two and many more characteristic family types. / These two have been selected for comment only because they represent two extreme examples of diverse family types, not in any sense because they are held to be supremely important over other types.

There are many other denominational families which are the bearers of highly significant aspects of Christian life and faith and practice. The whole inclusive truth of Christianity would suffer loss if any denomination, or religious society that has a peculiarly significant mission in the world or a special phase of life and thought to hold up to the light, failed in its obedience to heavenly vision and allowed its unique contribution to be missed. These denominational families, appealing as they do to special needs and aptitudes

in individual minds, minister to such persons more effectively than any other organized form of Christianity could do and consequently arouse in them a keener and more glowing loyalty than could probably have been produced in any other way.

One of the most important sentiments is that of "belonging." There are hosts of persons that have membership in Churches who yet never attain to that adjusted state of mind which makes them feel the joyous thrill of "belonging." The relationship is casual, more or less accidental and formal. The moment one "finds his life" in and through a Church family, discovers that it speaks to all his deepest spiritual longings and aspirations and at the same time *needs him* as an organ of its work in the world, he becomes thrilled with a sense of "belonging." That experience is an epoch in one's life and with that awakening comes the feeling of *expectancy* without which religion remains a dull affair. That sense of "belonging" and that feeling of "expectancy" might conceivably come to birth for the individual and often has done so in a great Universal Church, but it has just as certainly also happened in a smaller denominational family, definitely adapted to the individual's peculiar needs and tastes and close and friendly enough to draw him into its warm and enveloping fellowship.

Nobody is ever going to be an important member of any branch of the Church until he *does* something for

it. Lives are formed and character is built by *motor-effects*. So long as one remains at the stage of ideas or emotions or fine sentiments; these unused states of mind will ooze away, dissipate and leave no permanent moral fiber behind. It is when they stimulate muscles into action and plow paths of habit and change the molecular structure that character is made. If a Church member does not get beyond the stage of a pew-sitter—a “hearer of the word” only—he has missed the full meaning of membership. He must discover that his personal contribution is *needed* to carry out the mission of the Church and he must feel the joy of service before his loyalty can be truly fashioned. It seems pretty clear that the opportunity for the motor-effect type of loyalty is most likely to come to a person through a compact and intimate religious fellowship of the denominational type, though that would not always be the case, for it is undoubtedly a fact that some persons feel themselves to be more truly found and shepherded in a vast, imperial, awe-inspiring Church of the universal type, than in a smaller group.

But there is not, and there cannot be, any defense of denominational families of the old infallible sectarian order. Even those who count most on the importance of august authority must learn to recognize that other branches of the Church are as certainly members of God's great household and family as their own beloved one is. The atmosphere of rivalry, the insistence on

exclusive possession of truth and salvation, the hardness of heart which goes with that state of mind, and the holier-than-thou attitude, defeats the very aim and function of a Church of Christ. There can be no true and legitimate place for denominational Church families unless they can be genuine organic spiritual members of one unified Body of Christ builded together for a habitation of God in the Spirit. Such a consummation seems no doubt like a dream, a far-off event that could come only by miracle. But something very much like miracles have had a way of happening in the course of Christian history. All that would be needed to ensure this consummation would be the actual answer to the prayer of benediction which all churches pray each week: "May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the holy spirit be with you and in you all."

## VII

*Mission and Function*

It has seemed necessary to dwell at considerable length on the nature and unity of the Church. But its mission and function in the world are even more important. The central issue to-day in every Church is the discovery of a mission and a function that will rally the allegiance and arouse the loyalty of the youthful forces of this age. Many things have been tried with-

out much success. The Church cannot go forward on its old momentum. It cannot pass this crisis unless it can do much more than just "pass it." In order to conquer it must "more than conquer." It must rise to a type of leadership which thrills and challenges this present generation. There can be a moratorium for debts, but there cannot be a moratorium for the faith and mission of the Church. If it is to live, it must be *continuous*. It must possess this generation if it is to have the one after it. That means that those who are the responsible leaders and the influential guides must understand the times and know how, or at least learn how, to kindle the lives of the youth of to-day with a fervor and a passion which will result in a new line of march, a new conquering spirit.

The first essential aspect in the mission of the Church is bound to be its power to produce a sense of the reality of God in the lives of those who come to it for help and inspiration. There are many platforms for contemporary problems. We have forums enough. But there are very few places outside the Church where persons can be helped to find and feel the real living presence of God. The art of worship has for multitudes of persons become a "lost art." Worship has become a word of little meaning. It is much easier to lecture than it is to take the lead in the way of wonder and in the practice of the presence of God. It is an art, a way of life, the culture of which for the best



results needs to begin early in life, when the feeling of wonder, awe and reverence is a natural, spontaneous trait. And that means that it must become an important function of the Church to train its children in this noblest of arts, so that they shall not drift on into a state of secular-mindedness where nothing is real except what can be touched and handled. This educational aspect will be considered further in Chapter VI. The focus of attention in the Protestant Churches for many generations was on doctrine. That seemed so essential that far too little stress was given to those more illusive and subtler aspects of worship through which the interior depth of life is gained. There exists now a quickened interest in this intimate and central feature of religion, and the time seems to be thoroughly ripe and ready for a new advance in this highest art of life.

One reason why worship in its highest aspects has been neglected in our busy world is that the practical demands of life have pushed the Church all the time in the direction of what is called "efficiency." The "results" of worship are not easy to appraise. The period of worship looks to a mere observer like a period of lost motion. It is difficult to link it up to the obvious tasks waiting to be done. If it is to take its true place of power, however, we must learn to discover that increase of depth in life, formation of interior resources, the creation of subsoil wealth in a person's life, may

prove to be of vastly greater importance than is getting a few more things done. It is a right idea in the main to keep attention pretty well focused upon the creative and constructive side of the mission of the Church, but we shall do well to remember that worship is one of the most important preparations for creative and constructive effort. The way of wonder, through worship, is a richer preparation for the way of action to which we are called.

Christianity is in any case a kind of life that is to be *lived* here and now. "*This day this is to be done,*" is the way Christ finished his first sermon, as he "closed the book and sat down." The program of life outlined in that first sermon, which Jesus felt was laid upon him by the Spirit of the Lord, was a gospel for the poor, the proclamation of good tidings of release and liberation, recovery of vision, enlargement of the scope of life, and the realization of God's creative plan for man's life on earth. It was not an ideal intended for a *post-mortem* realm; it was the interpretation of a way of life which would restore man—the common man of toil and labor—to his full rights and privileges as a man and as a potential son of God.

If the Church is to recover its commanding place of influence in the life of the world to-day it must give a larger share of leadership to those who are young. The entire Church must be penetrated with a new spirit of adventure, and that spirit is peculiarly a character-

istic of youth. To-day those who are young seek their adventures in the air. They climb Himalayan mountain peaks, they go out on dangerous expeditions of exploration or of hunting big game. They would turn this spirit of adventure into new channels and carry the glowing ideals of their young lives into the creative work of the Church if they were summoned to it and were given the freedom and responsibility which are essential to real adventure.

There is fortunately already a youth-movement in the Church, but it has too often tended to become a thing apart from the Church itself. Instead of being taken up into the organic life of the whole body, the religious-minded youth find their interests and their life in and through a sub-organization and carry on a parallel line of activity. They still do not make their fresh contribution into the life and work of the Church; they form a society with its own separate functions, so that they fail to bring their powers and capacities into play in the Church itself and they fail to have the life and power of the larger community fellowship flowing through them. It is an advance over what prevailed in former times, but it is not quite good enough. The genuine step forward will be taken when the leaders clearly see that the Church must be brave enough to let its youth share completely in shaping the onward reaching progress of all the spiritual forces of the age.

It is obvious that great changes are to come in the

social and economic order in which our lives are lived. It is a crucial question whether these changes are to be led and guided by sheer secularist aims and brought about by external forces, or whether they are to come through wise transforming methods and are to be interpreted by a spirit of understanding love and co-operation. The world with its burden of agonies and injustices is always in grave danger of being hurried into too easy and superficial solutions of the deep-seated troubles of society. There can be no real solution so long as the changes that are made are on a merely secularist plane, and have to do solely with external re-adjustments, though it is just as futile to talk piously of changing man's inner life without changing the social and economic environment into which children are to be born.

But it is as certain as the procession of the equinoxes that no world which will be recognized as a *good world* can be built without the liberation and the culture of man's spiritual nature. He must learn how to love with greater depth and wisdom. He must be stirred with profounder reverence and awe. He must be lifted above himself and above his secular interests through a quickening relation to an invisible environment which enlarges and exalts him. The greatest epochs of advance in the life of the race have been periods when the spiritual realities of the universe have broken in on the soul with new certainty and with increased power. It

is the business of the Church to be the transmitter of these higher cultural forces. Here once more the Church must catch the bold and adventurous spirit of its Founder and must be ready to take his way of life seriously and share his idealism toward man's divine possibilities. In all these matters as also in the intellectual issues of our time the function of the Church is not to dogmatize or impose a ready-made conclusion on others, but to *lead*, to illuminate, to inspire, to infuse a healing and creative spirit into the heart of humanity and through the entire social fabric. It must keep the demands of personality in the primary place above the claims of property. There are immense areas of the social world hardly touched by those springs of life and light and love that are peculiarly committed to the Church. We used to talk of regions in foreign lands as "zones of darkness," but we are awakening to discover that there are darkness areas and twilight zones here where our own flag floats and where our school houses proclaim culture. We have not learned how to treat other races, and peoples of other colors as they should be treated. We are still backward in the possession of skill and methods of dealing with crime and criminals. With all our outlay for education we somehow fail to produce, in multitudes of cases, the expert mind, the rightly fashioned life, the solid, disciplined will, that are essential for a wise and stable democracy.

It would seem as though we had problems enough

at home to absorb all the powers and capacities which the Church possesses. There are challenges and tasks awaiting it at every turn of the road. And yet the mission of the Church must never be confined to the home land where it has its abiding place. As an early Christian writer beautifully said: "Every land is a Fatherland for the true Christian." The Church in any region is a colony of the spiritual realm\* with a citizenship far beyond its home boundaries. Its own life and health, even if one were to think of nothing more, can keep strong and sound only as it pours its streams of life out for the help and refreshment of those who are in need of light and love and enlarged life. The primary occasion for the writing of this book, in fact, was the consciousness that there must be new and greater spiritual resources for the coming tasks in foreign fields. The fields of service can no longer be marked off in terms of imaginary lines on a geography map. A live Church, awake to its full privileges as an instrument of the spirit of God, will spontaneously overbrim with an outflow of life and power.

When the Church becomes fully awake to its mission of spiritual interpretation and leadership in the world it will quickly see that it must have a new type of training for its ministers, its leaders, its "cures of souls" and for its mission workers. Their functions have altered profoundly. Their task has taken on a new significance

\* See Phil. III. 20.

and it must be done through new methods. The world is full of books and those who make up modern audiences have frequently been reading the latest ones. It is not information they want from their ministers; it is prophetic leadership, the kindling of their moral nature, an interpretation of their spiritual possibilities as men and a reinforcement of their hopes and aspirations. It is the impact and stimulus of a rich dynamic personal life that counts most, a friend and adviser, a man who "has been there" before us when we travel through the deeps and when we meet the waterspouts of life.

Many persons who are laymen in the Church to-day feel the need of concrete and specific guidance. They do not want a "father-confessor" of the old type, but they do need a sympathetic and understanding counselor to whom they can freely go for wise advice on the complicated problems of life and conduct. Then, too, if the lay-members are to make personal contributions to the social tasks of the Church, and if they are to work out their own faith in constructive ways of service they must have intelligent leadership from a man who can not only preach the gospel but can practice it as well in the world where our tasks and duties lie.

If the emphasis can be put on mission and function rather than on infallible possession of exclusive rights and privileges, if the Church can be thought of as an organ for the expression and manifestation of the Life of God here in the world of men, then we shall see at

once that many types of organization will be required to give full expression to the vast variety of ways through which human nature prefers to express itself. Every mother knows that she cannot fit each one of her varied children into a mold or system which happily happened to work well with her first-born offspring. There is something unique about the traits of every child and each one must have his chance to find himself in ways that fit his aptitudes. It is equally true in the Church which Christ is building through the ages. Still less possible is it for all minds to be satisfied with a single interpretation of truth and life. Such infinite realities as truth and life have multitudinous aspects and facets. One person wants one peculiar aspect brought into prominence while another puts the emphasis at a different point.

## VIII

### *A Body with Many Members*

A Church composed of several denominational families, each one giving peculiar expression to some important aspect of truth or to some special way of giving scope to life and activity would seem to fit the divine method as it is everywhere revealed in creation. But it is essential to any divine plan that all the varying denominational families shall be coöperative members of *one whole Body*, not rival parts claiming mon-



opoly of rights and privileges. This organic Church of many members may be a remote ideal at the present moment, but until humanity changes beyond recognition no other type of Church unity seems to be within reach of intelligent faith and hope, nor does any other form seem feasible or desirable.

There is a steady maturing of the human mind and as the mind of man matures it prizes intensely its own personal freedom of thought and action. The free individual wants to find scope for a rich life and opportunities for self-realization and self-expression in and through a congenial group-fellowship. Some minds will be best satisfied in self-governing communities and others will wish for the prestige and splendor of an august overarching historical system into which the individual fits his life. They are not inconsistent ways and they need not cancel one another out.

God fulfills Himself in many ways  
Lest one good custom should corrupt the world.

But this must not be a static idea buried away in the pages of a book. If it is true it is a burning challenge to adventure. "If thou dost not act thou hast done nothing," is the glowing word of a noble soul in the seventeenth century. Nothing amazes the beholder more than the enthusiasm and the dedication with which the Russian youth have faced the endurances and the sacrifices involved in building into reality the

vision and hope of a noncapitalistic society. The thing we lack to-day in our spiritual undertakings is just that enthusiasm, that passion of expectancy, that dedication, that spirit of sacrifice which moves mountains and achieves miracles. There has flamed up in our time in a few souls a kindled passion for Church unity. Two saintly men, Bishop Brent and Robert Gardiner, burned out their lives prematurely in work and struggle for the union of all Christians. It will perhaps not come finally along the line of their hope and expectation, but it will come sooner or later along some line which preserves the uniqueness and the precious peculiar mission of each family type in the larger inclusive Family of that Father after whom all families in heaven and earth are named.

In any case, however the organization and unity of the Church may eventually come to fuller perfection, it may be taken for granted that the Church of Christ is not fulfilling its mission on earth and cannot fulfill it unless it takes up the task of reshaping the basis of the civilization to which it belongs from generation to generation and of rebuilding the social order of which it is a part more nearly into conformity with the ideas of the Kingdom of God, that is to say, of a more completely realized humanity. This "more completely realized humanity" can be seen and judged under two major aspects. (1) Christianity wherever it reveals its true scope and power raises the spiritual level and value

of personal life. Somewhat as the invisible attraction of the moon raises a central plateau of water in the ocean far above the surrounding waters, so there has appeared in all Christian centuries a lifting and transforming power in Christ to raise men and women who are reached by His attraction to a new level of life and character. The simplest tests of the transformation are to be found in the "fruits" that appear in character and action—a heightened spirit of love and grace, peace and serenity, in the midst of difficulty and frustration, the formation of a sympathetic and understanding mind, a courageous heart and a magnanimous purpose and withal a joyous and radiant life.

But (2) a good life can never be attained in isolation. It is like the second part of a return ticket, "not good if detached." And within limits the goodness of a life is largely determined by the relative goodness of the social group in which it is imbedded. If the individual reaches on ahead too far beyond the social group to which he belongs the aims of his life are apt to be frustrated and the purpose of his life defeated. He is bound, therefore, if he would be effective to dedicate himself to the task of raising the whole quality of the social environment to which he belongs. The mission of the Church will thus always be twofold, the perfecting of personal character and the transformation and rebuilding of the social fabric. The "coming" of the Kingdom of God involves both aspects as much as physical life involves breathing-in and breathing-out.

In any case the utilitarian motive of rewards and punishments must fall away and be replaced by a glowing passion for a redeemed and purified inward self and a no less glowing passion for a redeemed and morally ordered social world. There will be little place in the future for a Church whose main function is conceived to be the securing of a *summum bonum* for a favored few in another world beyond this one where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest. A Church which accepts the mission of being a peaceful refuge or an ark of safety for a chosen remnant of the race is doomed like Noah's ark, to come to an end on some lonely, barren mountain top, apart from the actual lives of the men who toil and suffer.

The true Church of the future will be recognized as Christ's Church, not by the purity of its speculative dogma, nor by the validity of its claim to have preserved unaltered the genuine apostolic *ecclesia*, but by an unmistakable demonstration, in spirit and power, in love and service, that it is an organ in the world for the revelation of the Life of God to the lives of men, and by its brave and fearless championship of those social and economic ideals of life which in the best and truest way enlarge the scope of human freedom and enable men and women and little children to fulfill their divine possibilities, not in a world beyond the stars, but here in this checkerboard world of black and white, which man is to subdue and conquer for spiritual ends.

## CHAPTER VI

### A NEW EMPHASIS IN EDUCATION

#### I

#### *Our New Task*

THE preceding chapter has indicated the urgent need of a different type of education from that which prevails for the training of those who are to be the future leaders and guides in the sphere of religion. We need a genuine school of prophets as the builders of the Church in this new epoch. But even more urgent is the need of a new type of religious training for the little children whom God has given us to guide into the ways of life.

Almost every person who is concerned for the spiritual culture of youth is distressed to find that the Sunday School is not a more potent agency in the lives of little children and young people. There are notable instances in which the Sunday School is a strikingly effective influence, but beyond question there is a widespread revolt of young people against attending it any longer after they reach the age of about sixteen, and sometimes revolt comes earlier. Too often the Sunday

School fails to awaken a growing interest in the years of adolescence. Its method of study and its approach to life seems unreal. It produces in many instances a spirit of hostility toward the Bible and toward religion in general and thus often defeats the very end for which it exists. This is partly due to the labored attempts to extract farfetched moral lessons out of Scripture passages which were not written for that purpose. The whole method seems to a lively boy dull, dreary and unreal. With difficulty he holds his mind to it. He feels himself injected into a world in which he does not find himself at home.

Here, as in so many other fields of education, the imaginative quality in the religious training has run too low, while the factual element of the teaching and the emphasis on a moral lesson for a mind not ready for it have been pushed too hard. The little sections of Scripture, cut out of their literary context, and used apart from their historical background, leave on the mind an air of unreality, and in the end the student fails to get his mind stored even with the fact material of the Bible, and he remains unfamiliar with the story narratives and significant events.

If experts in modern educational methods could work the miracle of discovering how to use the world's supreme spiritual literature to fit the inherent aptitudes and interests of the maturing mind of our youth and could help them to find through the stages of moral

and spiritual development of the race the ideals and springs of life which they need for their own journey, creative results would certainly follow. It is not so much a new type of religious education that is needed as it is the application of the wisest methods of psychology and pedagogy and of good human insight for leading young people on into the richest meaning of life. It is perhaps the most urgent single educational task now waiting in the world to be done.

But an educational reform still more far-reaching than that is essential if we are to have any adequate program for building the new world of our faith and hope. Once the Church held the sole key to the culture and education of those who were to shape the destiny of the world. It is no longer the case. Education, like so many other features of modern life, has been to a great extent secularized and the Church directly touches only a small area of the educational domain. This absence of direct control is as it should be. The function of the Church, here as in so many other aspects of life, should be one of inspiration and creative vision rather than of control, direction and compulsion.

What needs to grow clear in the minds of all who are responsible for the training of youth, whether within or entirely outside the Church, is the fact that all genuine education must have a spiritual quality to it, that is, it must have to do with the formation of personality, the building of character, the enlargement of

life, the transmission of the supreme experiences of the race and with setting free the higher potential powers of the individual. Religion is not something apart from life. It is not something injected from the outside. It is life raised to full correspondence with its full rich and complete environment. Those aspects of awe and wonder and reverence which give larger inner dimensions to life belong to all stages of education. Nobody who attains to the life of a *person* will ever be satisfied with being an efficient tool for doing work. More and more, with the increase of labor-saving devices, the individual will be confronted with the problem of what to do with his enlarging periods of leisure. He will have, one hopes, more time to *live with himself*, and he will need more and more to have interior resources. It ought to be a primary function of education to assist the individual to find the whole of himself and to be prepared, not only to do a good piece of work, but to live and to enjoy life in ways that are rich and satisfying.

A great war has been fought in our time "to make the world safe for democracy." It failed to do it. And more than that, it revealed pretty clearly that no amount of warfare with weapons of force could ever make the world safe for democracy, that is, for self-government of the people, for the people and by the people. It is only by patient, persistent and constructive education that the world will ever be "safe" for any ideal ways



of life. Civilization is a perilous experiment in a world like ours. There are immense explosive forces concealed in human emotions and passions and complexes which put all noble experiments in peril. H. G. Wells has said that "we must choose between education and catastrophe." Almost any prophet could say that. What we want most is the prophet who can tell us what type of education we most need for our world tasks and how to get across from our old methods to new and effective ones. While we are waiting for the prophet to come, we must do the best we can to suggest some of the lines along which education should go forward.

## II

### *The New Emphasis*

A new emphasis of aim in education has been long overdue. Our excuse for dealing with it here is that there can be no such world as this Preface is forecasting without a profound revision of educational aims. Our educational methods were developed to fit the needs of a simple agrarian people who were busy conquering the virgin soil of a continent, and, before we were quite conscious of the transformation, we found ourselves a great industrial and commercial nation, more than half our people living in cities, a large proportion of them in cities of extensive area and swarming population. We have not yet built up any adequate educational

system for the new conditions which confront us. The old world into which many of us were born has long ceased to exist, and we have hardly begun to shake ourselves awake to discover the new order of things, or to shape the type of culture and the social ideals that are needed for it.

No one with sound mind will question the importance of the scientific conquest of nature which has been for two generations the major aim and aspiration in higher education, both here and abroad. The dominant desire to understand the complex frame of things, to feel at home in the universe, to know how to control in some degree its immense forces and to use them for the maintenance and furtherance of human life, is altogether laudable and has without doubt added to the general welfare of mankind. Curiosity, eagerness for a solution of mysteries, and a passion for truth for its own sake, are in themselves noble traits and motives.

But with the discovery and control of the forces of nature have come an immense increase of creative power and the birth of a host of new rivalries. The staggering shock of the World War has awakened many minds to the fact that the control of forces and the possession of power to use and direct the energies and raw materials of nature cannot make our world safe for any kind of well-ordered living. In fact, increase of power through the discovery and control of forces appears to bring into play new and unsuspected

dangers to civilization. Titanic forces put into the hands of unmoral giants can only mean a terrible menace to everything pure and true and beautiful and good. There are signs enough already in every line of modern life to indicate that the possession of power and the control of forces and materials, without the training of the heart along with it, make a new type of tyrant and put once more all the noblest inheritances of man's spirit in jeopardy. Men of an earlier time "built Babylon out of their own Babylonish hearts," and in all ages civilizations are built out of the dominant ideas and ideals that form the lives of the builders. If we want to remold our civilization, we must first set about training in new fashion the minds that are to do the building, especially training in social ideals.

We must take pretty much the same attitude toward merely vocational and occupational education. Important as it is to be efficient, to possess skill and technique, it, nevertheless, brings a real menace to the best ideals of life to have the workers of the world trained only to be highly efficient tools for turning out work and products, without having developed capacity for appreciating the intrinsic values of life and unable to make any real contribution to the moral and spiritual assets of the world. Competition, rivalry and machine culture grow apace but the spirit does not bloom. All education, however much its final aim may bear on preparation for a profession, or for technical tasks,

must be equally concerned with the formation of ideals of life, with the building of character and with the adjustment of the individual to the larger groups to which he belongs. To ignore that side of life is to defy the structural laws of the world.

### III

#### *Education Free and Creative; Not Pattern-stamped*

If there is to be a new stress put upon the formation of personality and upon the building of character in the educational process, it would seem at first sight as though a ready-made pattern of the good life should be set forth for the guidance and direction of perplexed teachers. Could not the "good life" be definitely described and the lines of its formation be drawn? Is it not possible once for all to map out the path of life and to present in advance the goal of life for a rightly fashioned person?

It would no doubt ease the teachers' burden if the model to be attained were clearly given and if the method of shaping noble personal character could be presented at the beginning of the teachers' task. But it cannot be done. In the first place, no one has the complete answer ready at this stage. The effective method will call for the coöperative labor of many experts and for the wisdom that can only be derived from many patient experiments. And in the second

place, it is not possible to pattern-stamp individual lives or to shape personality to fit exact preformed models. Ideals of life must be free and unique creations for each person. The goal of the good life is not something to be set up like the terminus of a foot race. The most that can be said here in this brief sketch is that the aim and ideal in education should as far as possible be focused upon the development of the whole self and that all the available agencies of self-realization should be used in vital and constructive ways.

It would perhaps seem wise, at first thought, if we propose to educate for human relationships, to base our education quite definitely on a detailed study of social and economic questions, to start with elemental problems of the social order and to train up all our youth to hold, maintain, defend, and practice a single, sound, sacred, basic theory of the social-economic system, somewhat the way every scientist, before doctrines of relativity came in to upset the easy method, fitted all his observations and calculations and predictions into a rigid, unvarying system of Newtonian gravitation.

But in the first place it is useless to expect that educators could ever agree universally on any such "right theory." Human society, with its multitudinous, palpitating human units, cannot be reduced to such abstract simplicity that it can be organized and handled, as gravitating particles of matter can be, under some unvarying law or principle that always applies and always

works. And in the second place, even if it were possible to make such a reduction and discover such a principle, that method of clamping or jamming fixed and ready-made ideas on the passive mind of youth is not *education*. Regimenting minds to a settled system made in advance is a far more serious form of "goose-step" than that which drills and disciplines into shape the unrecalcitrant bodies of soldiers, who have surrendered the right to think or to will.

Genuine education does not present to minds, young or old, some ready-made conclusion. It trains minds to face complex situations, it increases their capacity to think them through, to organize the facts involved, to *find* their laws and principles, to arrive freely and solely under the compulsion of the facts, to the conclusion that fits all the *data* that are there. To learn by rote, to store up a stock of memories, to receive a lot of stamped-in items, like a wax tablet, is not *education*. For better or for worse we are bound as educators to take the risks of turning students loose for the great adventure of discovering for themselves how the new world is going to be built.

The most important emphasis in the new education will not be training for the conquest of nature, nor for the invention of machinery, nor for practical efficiency in output, nor for the formulation of economic theories, but for the fullest and completest formation of personal life in the midst of a social environment of

other people. The most important function of education is the discovery of the potential aptitudes in the lives of boys and girls, the training and control of instincts and emotions, the formation of ideals and loyalties, the shaping of the trend of character and the infusion of life with magnanimous aims and purposes and the open-minded coöperative spirit. In short, schools and colleges ought to be centers for the big business of life-planning and life-building as well as places for the accumulation and discovery of facts. One of these undertakings has been carried forward to successful achievement; the other has been only indifferently attempted.

## IV

*"The Race Is Run by One and One"*

In a remarkable address which he delivered in 1930 at the University of California, Owen Young pointed out that the trouble with all the schemes to rehabilitate Europe since the war has been that the manipulators of them have been busy with abstract economics and politics, with leagues and conventions, with delimiting nationalities and finding ways and means of providing for *security*, while all the time *the actual human faces*, the palpitating human lives, that make up the population of these countries, are pretty well forgotten. Behind all these abstract schemes that are pushed back

and forth like pawns on a chess board, are myriads of human persons, many of them young and expectant, whose lives never come in for consideration in all these conferences for the settlement of economic and political policy and for guaranteeing security. Owen Young does well to remind us of the vital fact of human faces wistfully asking to be considered as an essential part of the problem.

Too often the human faces have in the same way been overlooked in our educational schemes. Education has involved absorbing financial undertakings. The economic factor has swollen to an enormous size. Million dollar school buildings, immense equipment, wheels within wheels of mechanism have been contrived. Institutions have grown almost magically beyond all the dreams of their founders, and the persons entrusted with the management of them have found themselves forced to give a vast amount of their time and energy to the framework and the setting of the educational task. They have had little opportunity to ask what was happening to the human faces peering out there behind the framework and the setting.

Every time the expert impartially studies the output of the expanded schools and colleges which we have been laboriously building in America he gives us solemn warning that all is not well with us, that our education too often does not actually educate, that in our maze of pedagogical systems and schemes we are too



oblivious of the concrete human faces and the potential lives with which we ought to be concerned.

We are fortunately in the midst of sweeping educational reforms but our inherited systems still harbor fixed habits which are outgrown. One of these habit systems is the assumption that a method of teaching that fits *one* mind must consequently fit all minds, and so we forthwith proceed to wholesale our supplies of truth to all who come, instead of studying individual aptitudes and adjusting our method and our technique to fit the special needs of the particular case. We forget the human faces looking out behind the systems.

Another one of our habit customs is the tendency to educate for "credits" instead of educating for ends and values of life. We are busy asking what will get a person on from one grade in the educational factory to another as though he were a Ford car, instead of asking what will make a person richer and deeper in character. A disillusioned college president tells us that "students are considered as so many logs of pulp-wood to be turned into a certain number of paper degrees at the end of the senior year." Sooner or later we must smash that old bastille of examinations for grades and find new and freer ways of discovering and estimating intellectual progress. That will be the beginning of a new day. It may be said emphatically that education which focuses on passing off examinations is not in any true sense real education.

Another of our outgrown customs is our fancy for a vast variety of casual lines and fields of scrappy information instead of the mastery of some continuous, unified, coherent and cumulative plan of work that brings a growing interest to the student and the steady development of his mental powers. A few subjects pursued with diligence and accurately mastered give a far better basic education for life than does a multitude of half-digested fields of study. Time spent in getting a thin smattering of one or two foreign languages, not sufficiently mastered to be of any practical use or to supply any formative culture, is time largely wasted and opportunity for real culture lost.

## v

*Imagination and Loyalty*

The way imagination is trained is always one sure test of the educational quality of an institution. Too often the emphasis has been put upon the pupils' capacity to remember facts, or to exhibit a successful stock of information, or to give the meter, the syntax and the factual features of a great literary creation, while extremely little has been done to ensure an appreciation of the work, or to heighten the pupils' power to *see* the deeper, subtler meaning of life through it, or to enable them to expand their world in ideal directions and see scenes of life in their richer possibilities. It is well

known that those who have been drilled on some great classic in literature as a requirement for entrance to college seldom ever want to see it or hear of it again. It has produced a revolt of spirit instead of having given "an imaginative dominion" over the dry facts of life.

One difficulty which underlies the present apparent loss of interest in religion is the widespread factual approach to all subjects. The way in which the great epic stories of the Old Testament for example have been brought down to the level of fact instead of being seen in terms of their larger significance for life is one dulling effect of the failure to cultivate and expand the power to *see*, which ought to be the function of all great literature.

Fortunately the dawn is breaking and the new day is at hand. It has already begun in many places, especially in the lower grades of education. New methods, new aims and new ideals are also at least in the experimental stage in many institutions of higher learning.

The culture of imagination, which is such an important mark of successful education, has been carried to a very high level in more than one school. Everybody who teaches knows that the arousal of interest and expectancy is an essential task that confronts the teacher. The "project method" has proved to be an immense stimulus in this direction. It introduces creative ingenuity; it gives scope for muscular activity and

skill; it develops originality and leadership; it appeals to the dramatic instinct; it arouses international interests and sympathies; and it gives every member of a class something personal to do. The springs of curiosity and discovery are brought into play and education is linked up as it ought to be with actual living. Interests are quickened, imagination is kindled, loyalties are formed and there is a steady unconscious pull forward. Discipline in many instances has ceased to be a major problem for teachers, and parents in many cases have found their children almost recreated by their newly awakened interests and expectations. Unfortunately "project methods" do not fit all educational subjects nor all types of students or teachers.

Not less important than training the imaginative powers of the child is the work of organizing the instinctive and emotional forces through systems of interest and springs of action. These processes of organization go on unconsciously in the life of the child from the very beginning of his development. Alexander Shand, in his *Foundations of Character*, lays down as the first fundamental law of character formation: "Mental activity tends, at first unconsciously, afterwards consciously, to produce and sustain system and organization." What happens in this process of system-building is that the native powerful driving forces and explosive tendencies come under the control of central interests and later of ideal aims. Slowly the cruder and coarser

instinctive-emotional traits are organized and sublimated and become systems of loyalty, or systems of sentiment, which lie at the base of all character formation. The natural joy in games, the influence of friendship, the feeling of admiration for persons who have attractiveness or prestige, the study of striking biographies, the power of noble ensamples, living or dead, the creative use of characters in fiction and drama—all these things are likely to bring sublimation and to form subtle and far-reaching loyalties.

## VI

*History and Group Consciousness*

History teaching ought, as far as is humanly possible, to be liberated from the incubus of propaganda and made an illuminative revelation of moral issues. One of the most terrible devices for the distortion of truth, and for the permanent injury of *souls*, is the use of a history class room for the cultivation of hate in innocent young minds toward the people of a rival nation or race. It is bad enough to use the scenes of past battle fields for the purpose of arousing national pride and for glorifying one country at the expense of another one, but it is far worse to make use of battles and of the enflamed passion that has been born of past wars to create a new passion in the hearts of children that can be cashed in as an asset toward preparation

for new wars. History impartially taught can be made one of the most potent forces of culture for the discovery of the laws of life and for the formation of social ideals. The honest use of it as a genuine method of culture ought to be as sacred an obligation to the teacher as is the impartial study of the laws of nature.

Courses dealing with present-day international issues and with social, political and economic problems in all countries of the world are almost as important as are courses in history, and should as far as possible supplement the latter. What is happening in contemporary life has very vital significance for the formation of culture and for the shaping of ideals. These courses should be carried on with the same breadth of view and with the same solidity of scholarship as is the case in the history courses, and it goes without saying that this work should be under the guidance of wise teachers who have genuine leadership.

It is peculiarly important that all education should clearly bring out the fact that no one in this world *can* live unto himself, that one person alone is no person. The selfish aspirations of a boy, his decision to aim to get his own isolated pleasure, his snobbery toward others, would tend to fade away and weaken if he were made to see with clear insight that there can be no such thing as an "isolated" person, that it is as impossible as having a stick with only one end to it, that in actual fact we are all bound together with others

in life, in interests, in gains and in relationships and that consequently we must share ourselves and surrender ourselves and give ourselves if we are to make any kind of life that is worth living.

The interesting facts of mutual aid among animals can admirably be used to illustrate the working of what has been called the "conjunct" character of life. The tribal habits of primitive man will supply another set of illustrations. Then may come vivid pictures of the impossibility of life for a child in the years of helplessness without the care of others, the supply of food and clothes, shelter and warmth. The pupil can quickly be made to see that no language can be learned unless one is embedded in a living group of persons who speak the language and pass it on to the newcomer. The same is true of our ideas and ideals. We must get all the material of our thinking and of our imagining from some social group. Nobody can be a getter and a receiver unless he is at the same time a giver and a contributor. All these solemn facts need to be driven in and made an inherent part of any true culture.

Some of our greatest authorities in science are telling us that the most inclusive law in the universe is the principle of concretion or organism, or, as the Rt. Hon. J. S. Smuts has called it, "organic wholeness"—the tendency to produce *wholes out of units*. If the principle is a sound one, as many thinkers now believe, it means a momentous revolution in thought. However

important the "unit" may be, it can never be comprehended until it is seen as a "cell" in a larger organic whole. We do not understand an "atom" until we know how it is bent to conjoin with more atoms to form a "molecule" and the molecule, again, will have its tendency to form a larger whole. As soon as life emerges the *organic* feature is even more in evidence and we find ourselves carried on and up from single "cells" to ever higher organic wholes. A man is an immense congeries of coöperative cells, but a man is not a "person" until he, too, finds his place in a living coöperative social whole, of ever more inclusive scope and range. Genuine education in the future must aim to train personal units to become living, coöperative parts of inclusive social wholes.

Every opportunity must be seized during lessons and in sport to drive home the importance and the significance of coöperation. Young people need constantly to gain insight into the value of understanding other persons' minds and thoughts and emotions, and with these processes should go the cultivation of respect for personality at every stage of its development. Everything should be done that can be done to illustrate and demonstrate the effect of getting the other person's point of view and of coördinating with others rather than aiming to outdo or to get the best of those with whom one has dealings. The cultivation of kindness and thoughtfulness in all relations toward those who



have physical defects and peculiarities is an essential part of true education and it ought to extend to differences and peculiarities of race and color, so that it becomes "second nature" to be respectful to persons of other races.

## VII

*Discipline and Depth*

In speaking favorably, as has been done, of certain modern types of education, nothing should be said that would imply sympathy with any methods of education that neglect mental or moral *discipline*. There is no soft and easy way to any high qualities of life or character. This is the age of the moving staircase. One steps on and is carried without effort to the destination. We turn a button and start our furnace, light our house, or bring the music of a great orchestra to our parlor. But let no one make the mistake of thinking that he can attain truth by the escalator method or that he can achieve a character by the nimble turning of a button. Robust personality can never be formed without constant insistence on the restraints and sanctions of nature and the no less important sanctions and restraints of society. If there is to be any freedom that is based on reality, it must be a freedom that respects everybody else's rights and, too, a freedom that conforms to the eternal nature of things. It takes long experience to

discover where the curve of freedom runs and the wise teacher must not let those in his charge suppose that freedom is a soft and easy thing.

The experiences of the race in all lands through many centuries give unquestioned evidence that periods of deep hush and silence are strikingly effective toward the spiritual development of persons of all ages. Long before anybody knew *why* pauses of quiet worked restorative and creative effects, and before psychologists had succeeded in demonstrating the fact, the unconscious wisdom of the race had hit upon this method of deepening life. It could, I am convinced, be made an important element both of intellectual and spiritual culture at all stages of school life. The heightened capacity of the mind after periods of quiet concentration is solidly proved, and there is little doubt that group-silence is far more effective than solitary silence is.

There ought, therefore, to be a good deal of experimental work done on the deepening and expansive effects of silent meditation for children and for the discovery of ways to feed and fertilize the deep subsoil of the child's mind out of which his ideas and his volitions emerge. When anyone discovers how to stir the deeps within, to free the child from fears and to bring this deep-lying life of the individual into closer relationship with the essential Life of the universe, great moral energies are lib-

erated. Schools, which for one reason or another do not have a daily period for Bible reading or Prayers, would find a short period of corporate silence of great value for deepening the life of the children and for training them in spiritual control and concentration. It would be well if everybody gave some time each day to consider seriously his own deepest aspirations and to ask himself in a silent confessional what are his most cherished ideals for life.

Coupled with careful scientific training and with the development of capacity to see and to describe facts as they are, should be joined the no less important training of the mind to appreciate and enjoy those subtler aspects of the universe which do not submit to exact description. Beauty is as real as atoms or as life-cells are, and it is at least as important to know how to react significantly to the beauty of the world as it is to know how to describe the atom in mathematical terms. Joy and wonder in the presence of beauty and sublimity are as rich in value for life as fact-knowledge is and the key to the heart of things is certainly not always a formula of knowledge. The things by which men live are more apt to be found in the realm of appreciation than in the realm of pure knowledge, and consequently an education that deals with the latter and neglects the former is sadly limited, as many men and women are now discovering. We are probably nearer the heart of reality in our naïve and unanalyzed

experiences of Nature than we are when we have reduced these experiences to a later stage of analysis and reflection.

## VIII

### *Gentle Forces and Sport*

The time is coming when every sound teacher will realize that it is fully as important to have expert treatment for children's fears and mental "complexes" as for their defects of eyesight and hearing. The child who is abnormally shy, embarrassed and bashful, or who withdraws from all social activities and sports, or who is obsessed by peculiar fears or who is sullen, moody and petulant, will never be successfully educated until he is delivered from his handicap, and no ordinary teacher can set him free unaided. A sound expert in mental hygiene can work what seems nothing short of a miracle in a boy who has acquired the unfortunate reputation of being "bad." The men and women who swell the ranks of the criminal class and who seem distinctly antisocial might under the right guidance and skill be on their way to be good citizens, if not high-powered saints, instead of criminals.

One of the greatest advantages in introducing some degree and some form of self-government in schools and colleges will be found in the way in which it develops a sense of responsibility for honor and truth in

the life of the school and for corporate order. It helps to make every student realize that he bears obligation not only for his own personal conduct but that he enters into and shares in the success and the failures of the whole group to which he belongs. He thus discovers through experience what it means to be a *unit in a social organism*.

In connection with discipline and control every one needs to receive instruction both by practice and teaching, in the use of gentle forces. It is a well-known fact that persons who shout and scream and threaten have no power of discipline. A calm and quiet tone and manner accomplish vastly more than storm and bluster do. Every way that can be devised of getting moral results by other methods than resort to force should be tried, if, for no other reason, because of the educative effect of it on the pupils and students themselves. There are few things more worth learning than the secret that the greatest forces are *soul-forces*, that the supreme power of one life over another one lies in the spirit and not in the muscles.

Education in its more creative and deepening aspects has almost certainly been retarded by the excessive emphasis put on football as a public spectacle. It is a noble and manly game when it is played as a sport. It involves a large element of intellectual skill and ingenuity as well as muscular hardness and robust physique. The features of control, of discipline and

of management have been a genuine asset. But the stadium features of a great spectacle, the worked-up mass cheering, the "must win" attitude, the immense commercial element, the excessive emphasis on coaching, the intense rivalries that are produced, the advertising factors which thrust themselves in, and the almost ineradicable tendencies on the part of alumni and others to secure a winning team by methods that are illegitimate, either in the field of sport or of education, should give serious pause to all who are concerned for genuine education for life. It seems to be clearly evident that the present system of high-powered, competitive mass athletics with its commercialism and its close kinship to professionalism, must give way to real sport of many types, with the opportunity for every student to play some game himself instead of being lined up to produce mass enthusiasm for the inspiration of a few highly trained players in an arena.

## IX

### *Ultimate Issues*

There can be little question that our youth to-day have suffered an immense loss in their education in that they have not been held more seriously to the task of carrying their intellectual problems through to *ultimate issues*. That has not been considered to be the concern of science. Science has quite properly confined

its operations to a less ambitious mission. It never pretends to go beyond the domain of things and events that occur in time and space. It declines to deal with mind or spirit as an actual factor in the processes of the world. It refuses to raise ultimate questions of origin and destiny. It cannot, therefore, make the universe a completely intelligible affair. But there are other departments of thought whose essential business is the deeper interpretation of life. There are far-reaching implications in the nature of these human minds of ours, with their capacities to organize facts of experience and to build up systems of truth, implications which need to be thought out to their farther reaches. We are confronted, too, all the time with realities of a different order from that composed of atoms and molecules. It is an unmistakable fact that the world reveals beauty and love and moral goodness as certainly as it does coal and copper. What we need as the keystone to any educational arch is an interpretation of these realities by which we live, in such a way that the student can be carried forward to a solid ground and basis for beauty and love and goodness in the eternal nature of things, and for the self-conscious spirit in us that apprehends and verifies these realities. Start anywhere you will with exalted beauty, or sacrificial love, or self-giving goodness and it leads on into a world that has spiritual foundations. It enables a person to "inhabit reality."

We need to find a principle of intelligibility and insight rather than more new facts in behind old facts. Here lies the central weakness and the main confusion of our present educational methods. This emphasis has swung the center of gravity very strongly over to the material side and the mental and spiritual and social factors of life have been missed to far too great an extent in the culture of our time. That is one of the deepest tragedies in the life and thought of to-day.

The tide has already turned, the new and deeper currents of thought are in evidence. The wiser leaders are conscious that the whole business of life suffers and goes awry as soon as the meaning and significance and high destiny of life fade away. That means that the scientific method of approach in all college work must be supplemented and balanced by a discipline of philosophy, by the study of the fundamental nature of mind and by a consideration of the central values of life and the social issues of it, as they have been revealed in the spiritual history of the race. If the results are to be sane and wholesome the defeative philosophers must decrease and the magnanimous thinkers must increase in influence.



## EPILOGUE

NOTHING has happened in the progress of research, or in the field of discovery, which gives legitimate ground for a collapse of faith in the central truths of Christianity. On the contrary, through what has been discovered and what has been demonstrated, a clearer basis for spiritual religion is emerging. W. J. Locke in one of his novels has the hero of it say: "I was going about in a state of suspended spiritual animation." That condition of "suspended spiritual animation" has become a familiar feature of modern life, but the "suspense" is not due to a breakdown of the *foundations* on which faith is builded. They still abide. The loss of faith has come largely from confusions of thought and perplexities of mind in the face of new and crowding issues. The crossroads have multiplied, the guideboards are missing, and it is easy to lose the sure track. There would come a revival of "spiritual animation" if once more a clear light were thrown on the path of the sincere wayfarer.

What the sincere soul most needs is a fresh reinterpretation of the central truths of Christianity in the light of all that is now known, and especially has the

hour struck for a practical application of these truths to the entire range and scope of human life and social relations. In his farewell charge to the Pilgrim Fathers, as they were leaving for the new world, John Robinson called upon them to be ready to receive and welcome any new light that might break forth to them.

Old orders change, yielding place to new, and we must learn that God fulfills Himself in many ways, not in one unvarying way. The great pastor of the Pilgrim flock in Leyden expected the new light to break forth through ordained and sacred channels. But sometimes new light comes through channels that have not been marked out as sacred and which seem strangely secular. "The marriage of the East and West," which unconsciously was accomplished by Alexander the Great, appears now to have been an essential preparation for the spread of Christianity. The emergence of the pagan races which overran and overthrew the Roman Empire in the fifth century proved to be a highway for the wider dissemination of Christian faith. We cannot divide *truth* into "sacred" and "secular" compartments. Clement of Alexandria, when Christianity was still young, said that "Truth by whomever spoken is from God," and we have slowly become ready for that brave conclusion. The historians who construct and verify and the scientific seekers who discover and demonstrate, belong among the prophets, for they can become and do become channels for new light to break forth through.

The defenders of the faith have long enough—in fact too long—thought of Christian truth as a fixed and finished deposit, entrenched behind ancient battlements to be guarded at all costs, and they have been turning their guns of defense in many instances against those who were engaged in demonstrating the very truths that are essential to the life and power of Christianity to-day. The prophet Jeremiah, if he were here, would say again to-day: "Take away the battlements, they are not of the Lord."

If the stream of life, which burst forth in Galilee and Judea nearly two thousand years ago, is to flow on with enriched volume, it must not be a piped and exclusive stream, it must accumulate and carry forward every contribution that is essential to its vital and healing work in the world of the twentieth century. We must hold our spiritual truth in ways that are consonant with all truth that is, or that can be, verified and established. God is the God of order, not of confusion. He is the God of the universe; not alone of some tiny area over which our little banners of private truth float. Fear and timidity do not keep house with the faith that is to overcome the world. The major tasks of Christianity, however, will not all be in the field of thought; they will be in the sphere of life and action. The Christian prophets of the new time will come to grips not with pagan hordes out of northern forests, but with cramping methods of education, with the dis-

integration of home life, with the weakened significance of the marriage relationship, with wasteful preparation for wars, with the overcrowding of city populations, with corruption and entrenched evils, with forms of injustice under which multitudes hopelessly struggle, in a word, with situations involved in the type and structure of the present industrialized and militant civilization.

The group of persons who have labored together on this *Preface*, which is literally a Preface, propose to go on with their labors in the application of Christ's way of life and of Christian ideals to these and other concrete and specific tasks which confront the world today. "We want to add," as a wise man has recently said, "*not more years to life, but more life to years.*" We who are working at these tasks have an unconquered faith in the coming expansion of Christian life and truth and in the revitalization of human society. In any case, the new life and power will come, as they always have come, through the recovery of fresh insight, through the reception of spiritual energies and through the practice and transmission of self-giving love, rather than by the proclamation of abstract notions and of finely constructed theories. John Woolman was speaking as a true prophet when he said: "It must become the business of our lives to turn all we possess into the channel of universal love." That must be *done* and not merely talked about, and we must learn

how to turn "ourselves" as well as "all that we possess" into these living, healing streams of life, so that there may be "a river of the water of life in the midst of the streets of the city."

Above everything, the new emphasis will be on *life, a way of life and complete moral and spiritual health*. The salvation which most concerns men and women today in all parts of the world is a salvation that brings to a person a liberated, enlarged and transformed life. He must find himself at greater depth. He must discover a greater dynamic to live by. He must learn how to love with increased richness and purity. He must gain control over his lower nature. He must acquire steadiness and patience in the midst of adversity and frustration. He must enter into a spirit of consecration and loyalty which delights to struggle for the lives of others. That kind of life will be equally suited to an earthly or a heavenly sphere. It will be prepared for whatever comes in the unfolding wisdom and purpose of God. It will be a type of life that overcomes the world and brings order out of its confusions.











